MY ESCAPE FROM GERMANY

ERIC A. KEITH

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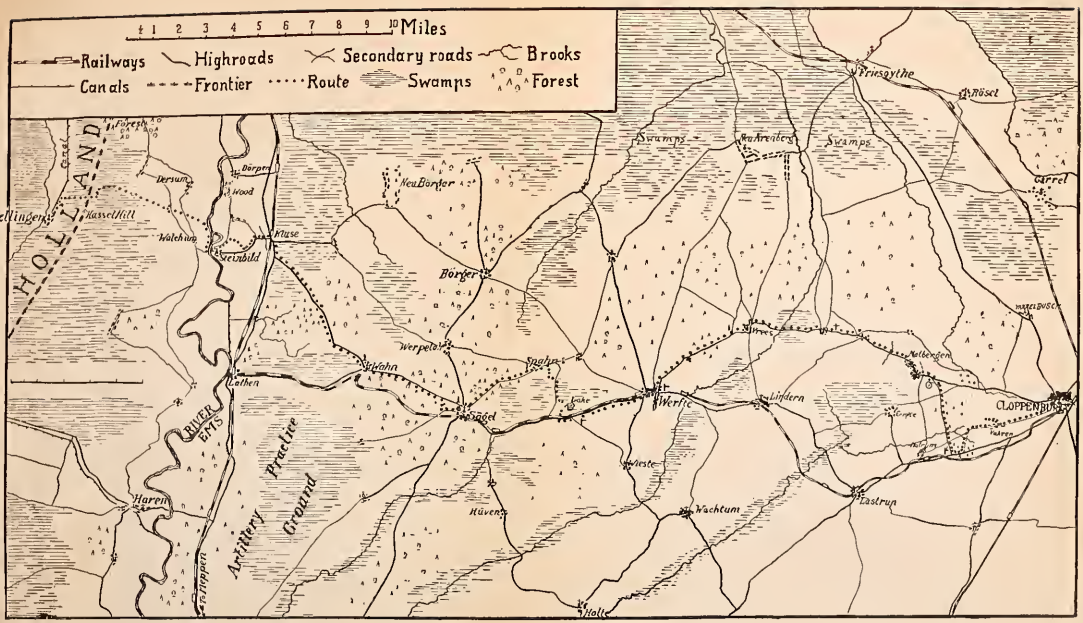

MAP ILLUSTRATING THE ROUTE OF AUTHOR'S ESCAPE.
The Dotted Line shows the Route taken.

Rösel
Canal
Garrel
VARELBUSCH
CLOPPENBURG
Varen

MY ESCAPE FROM GERMANY

BY
ERIC A. KEITH

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INTRODUCTION

THERE is an element of chance and risk about an attempt to escape from an enemy's country which is bound to appeal to any one with a trace of sporting instinct. Viewed as a sport, though its devotees are naturally few and hope to become fewer, it has a technique of its own, and it may be better, rather than interrupt the course of my narrative, to say here something about this.

As always, appropriate equipment makes for ease. But its lack, since a prisoner of war cannot place an order for an ideal outfit, may be largely compensated for by personal qualities.

In considering the chances of success or failure, it must always be assumed that the route leads through a country entirely unknown to the fugitive. Yet this is not so great a disadvantage as one might suppose. Once free from towns and railways, a man with a certain knowledge of nature and the heavens, and with some powers of observation and deduction, can hardly fail to hit an objective so considerable as a fron-

tier line, even if a hundred miles or so have to be traversed, provided he knows the position of his starting-point and is favored with tolerable weather.

With the sky obscured, he must at least have a pocket compass by which to keep his direction; though when the stars are visible it is easier and safer to walk by their aid.

Next in importance come maps. With fairly good maps, as well as a compass, the chances of evading discovery before approaching the frontier, with its zone of sentries and patrols, are, in my opinion, about even.

Another indispensable requisite is a water-bottle—a good big one. My own belief is that a man in tolerable condition—let us say good internment-camp condition—can keep going for from two to three weeks on no more food than he can pick up in the fields. But thirty hours without water will, in most cases, be too much for him. Under the tortures of thirst his determination will be sapped. I was, therefore, always willing to exchange the most direct route for a longer one which offered good supplies of water. In my final and successful attempt, when I was leader of a party of three and had to traverse a part of Germany where brooks and streams are rare, I always preferred taking the

risk of looking for fresh water rather than that of being without it for more than twenty hours between sources, relying in the meantime on what we had in our bottles.

The more clothing one can take along the better—within reason, of course. One is prepared to do without a good deal, but food must, if necessary, be sacrificed for a sweater and an oilsilk. Two sets of underclothing to wear simultaneously when the weather turns cold are a comfort. Beyond this, any one will naturally take such food as can be carried conveniently. Chocolate, hardtack and dripping, with a little salt, is, in my opinion, as much as one wants. Being a deliberate person, I usually managed to have enough of these in readiness before I even thought of other arrangements for the start.

People are very differently gifted with what might be called the out-of-door sense, though it is strong in some who have never really led an out-of-door life. Those who have this gift will know almost instinctively where to turn in an emergency, and will gather from the lie of the land information denied to those without it. This raises the question of companionship. As I am, fortunately, possessed of a fair share of this open-air sense, it was little handicap to

me to be alone on my first attempt. In fact, as long as I was using the railways, it was a distinct advantage. At critical moments a man can decide more quickly what to do, if he has only himself to think of, than when he has to consider and possibly to communicate with a companion, who may be contemplating a better but quite different solution. To know that it is only one's own skin that is at stake gives one that promptness of decision which is itself the seed of success; the thought of involving another man in an error easily clogs the swiftness of one's action.

On the march these conditions are reversed. One can walk only at night, and the approach of actual danger is best met by falling flat and keeping motionless, or else taking to one's heels. It is under trying conditions just short of the actual peril of discovery that the soothing influence of a companion is of inestimable advantage. Cross-country walking tries one's nervous forces to the utmost. Hour after hour passes, and no recognizable landmark appears. At last one gets the feeling of being condemned eternally to tramp over fields, skirt woods, and extricate oneself from an endless succession of morasses. In time the sky seems to reel and the compass-needle to point in all directions but the

right one. It is then that the voice of a friend, the touch of his hand, or merely the sound of his footsteps behind one, restores the sense of normality which, if one is alone, can be recovered only by a deliberate effort of will that is often very exhausting.

Before starting I always knew roughly what lay before me, and what I had to expect, until I met either with success or with complete failure by being captured. Even when the chances seemed to suggest it, I would never trust blindly to mere good luck, which I kept in reserve as an absolutely last resource. Once in hiding for the day, I usually worked out a detailed plan for the following night's walk, and spent hours looking at the maps in order to impress on my mind a picture, as complete as possible, of the country directly in front of me and to each side of my route.

When this book was first published I pointed out, that "It is one of the penalties of an escape that, so long as others remain behind, it is impossible for obvious reasons to give too precise details, and often the moments one would most wish to describe have of necessity to be camouflaged from the observation of the enemy." Now that the war is over and there is nothing to hinder it, I have been able to aug-

ment my original story with certain details originally omitted for reasons mentioned above. In its present form the book has been considerably enlarged and no detail of my escape has been omitted.

E. A. K.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
	INTRODUCTION	v
	PART I	
I	THE HOUSE OF BONDAGE	3
II	RUHLEBEN: THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS	13
III	THE SANATORIUM	25
IV	PLANNING THE DETAILS	31
V	A GLIMPSE OF FREEDOM	39
VI	IN HIDING	52
VII	FAILURE	69
VIII	A NEW HOPE	76
IX	BREAKING PRISON	91
X	CAUGHT AGAIN!	109
XI	UNDER ESCORT	120
XII	THE STADTVOGTEI AND "SOLITARY" . .	126
XIII	CLASSES AND MASSES IN THE STADTVOGTEI	146
XIV	PRISON LIFE AND OFFICIALS	154

CONTENTS

PART II

CHAPTER		PAGE
XV	A Fresh Attempt	179
XVI	From Berlin to Haltern	190
XVII	Westward Ho!	202
XVIII	The Game is Up	218

PART III

XIX	Footing the Bill	233
XX	Ruhleben Again	251
XXI	The Day	265
XXII	Order of March	292
XXIII	The Road Through the Night	304
XXIV	Crossing the Ems	319
XXV	The Last Lap	333
XXVI	Free at Last	348

PART I

MY ESCAPE FROM GERMANY

CHAPTER I

THE HOUSE OF BONDAGE

THE date was April 7, 1916. The fat German warder backed out of my cell, a satisfied smile on his face; the door swung to, the great key clicked in the lock, and I was alone.

Prison once more! And only a bare three miles away was the frontier for which I had striven so hard—the ditch and the barbed wire that separated Germany, and all that that word means, from Holland, the Hook, the London boat, and freedom.

The game was lost. That was the kernel of the situation as it presented itself to me, sitting on my bed in the narrow, dark cell.

Vreden, where I thus found myself in prison, is a little town hardly three miles from the Dutch frontier, in the Prussian province of Westphalia. So near—and indeed a good deal nearer—had I got to liberty!

Twenty-four hours before, my first attempt to escape from Germany—which might be de-

scribed with some justification as my third—had failed, and instead of being a free man in a neutral country, I was still a British civilian prisoner of war.

Apart from the overwhelming sense of failure which oppressed me, I was not exactly physically comfortable. To start with, I wanted a change of clothing and a real bath. I had not had my boots off—except during several hours when I was walking in bare feet for the sake of silence—for over eight days, and for almost the same length of time I had not even washed my hands. The change of clothing was out of the question. The bath— One does not feel as if one has had a bath after an ablution in a tin basin holding a pint of water, with a cake of chalky soap the size of a penny-piece, and a towel which, but for texture, would have made a tolerable handkerchief. And no water to be spilled on the floor of the cell, mind you!

My prison bed was an old, wooden "civilian" one with a pile of paillasses on it, and the usual two blankets. It was fairly comfortable to lie on, as long as the numerous indigenous population left you alone, which they rarely did.

The warder—the only one, I believe, in the prison—had asked me immediately after my arrival whether or not I had any money on me.

When he heard I had not, his face fell. Since he could not make me profitable he made me useful, and put me to peeling potatoes in the morning, a job I liked very much under the circumstances.

The food in Vreden prison was scanty, barely sufficient. I was always moderately hungry, and ravenous when meal-time was still two or three hours off. Twice in four days I had an opportunity of walking for twenty minutes round the tiny prison yard, sunless and damp, where green moss spread itself in three untrodden corners, while the fourth was occupied by a large cesspool. The rest of my time I spent alone in my cell, now and again reading a few pages of Jules Verne's "Five Weeks in a Balloon," execrably translated into German and lent me by the warder. But mostly I was busy speculating about my immediate future, or thinking of the eighteen months of my captivity in Germany.

Technically, I was not being punished as yet for my escape. I was merely being kept under lock and key pending my removal back to Ruhleben camp or to a prison in Berlin, I did not know which. But if it was not punishment I was undergoing in the little frontier town, it was an excellent imitation of it.

Some experiences, exciting when compared with the dull routine of camp life, were still ahead of me; the journey to Berlin was something to look forward to, at any rate. But what would happen afterward? I did not know, for I flatly refused to believe in solitary confinement to the end of the war—the punishment which had been suggested as in store for unsuccessful escapers.

I had not escaped from Ruhleben, as my predecessors had. I had walked out of a virtually unguarded sanatorium in Charlottenburg, a suburb of Berlin, where British civilian prisoners of war, suffering from diseases and ailments which could not be properly combated in camp, were treated. Might not this give an earnest to a plea which was shaping in my mind? Could the Germans be persuaded to believe that I had acted under the influence of an attack of temporary insanity, caused by overwhelming homesickness? True, I had "gone away" well prepared; I had shown a certain amount of determination and tenacity of purpose. On the other hand, I had not destroyed any military property. Of course, I had damaged a good deal of property, but it was n't military property! A fine point, but an important one, especially in Germany.

These were the sort of reflections which mostly occupied my four days in Vreden prison, unreasoning optimism struggling desperately against rather gloomy common sense.

What I looked forward to most in the solitude of my cell was a meeting with my old friends in Ruhleben camp in the near future. The other escapers had all been returned to camp for a short time before they were taken to prison, to demonstrate to us ocularly the hopelessness of further attempts. Surely the Germans would do the same with me; and then I should get speech with one or two of my particular chums. For this I longed with a great longing, although I did not look forward to telling them that I had failed.

Only one of them knew the first links in the chain of events which connected my sensations of the first day of the war with the present, when I was restlessly measuring the length of my cell, or sitting motionless on the edge of the bed, staring with dull eyes upon the dirty floor. Under the pressure of my disappointment, and without the natural safety-valve of talk to a friendly soul, I naturally began to examine my experiences during the war, opening the pigeon-holes of my memory one by one, reliving an incident here, revisualizing a picture there, and

retracing the whole length of the—to me—most important developments leading up to my attempted escape.

When the storm clouds of the European war were gathering I was living in Neuss, a town on the left bank of the Rhine, between Düsseldorf, a few miles to the north, and Cologne, twenty miles to the south. I had been there a little over a year. Immersed though I was in business, I was by no means happy. I was distinctly tired of Germany, and was on the point of cutting short my engagements and leaving the "Fatherland."

I had turned thirty some time before, and hitherto my life, although it had led me into many places, had been that of an ordinary business man. In spite of unmistakable roaming proclivities, it was likely to continue placidly enough. Then suddenly everything was changed.

One afternoon, about the 20th of July, I was standing in the enclosure of the Neuss Tennis Club, waiting for a game. The courts were close to a point where a number of important railway lines branched off toward Belgium and France. I was watching and wondering about the incessant traffic of freight-trains

which for days past had been rolling in that direction at about fifteen-minute intervals. They consisted almost exclusively of closed trucks.

Another member of the club pointed his racket toward one. "War material. Soldiers!" he said succinctly. With a sinking heart I gazed after the train as it disappeared from view. The political horizon was clouded, but surely it would n't come to this! It could n't come to this. It was impossible that it should happen.

The police, always troublesome and inquisitive in Germany, seemed to be taking some unaccountable interest in me. Nothing was further from my mind than to connect this lively interest in an obscure individual like myself with anything so stupendous as a war.

And then it happened. War was declared.

I was warned not to leave the town without permission. I was eating my head off in idleness and anxiety. I hoped to be sent out of the country at short notice, but the order to pack up and be gone did not come. Instead, I was invited to call upon the inspector of police at 9 A.M. on the 27th of August. I obeyed. An hour later I was locked up in a cell of an old, evil-smelling, small prison. I did not know for what reason, beyond the somewhat incompre-

hensible one of being a British subject. Nor did I know for how long. The inspector of police had answered my questions with an Oriental phrase: It was an order!

It appeared that the order referred to Britishers of military age only, which, according to it, began with the seventeenth and ended with the thirty-ninth year. Thus it came about that I made the acquaintance of three out of the six Englishmen then temporarily living in Neuss, but hitherto beyond my ken. They were all fitters of a big Manchester firm, Messrs. Mather & Platt Ltd., employed in putting up a sprinkler installation in the works of the International Harvester Co., an American concern in Neuss.

We were treated comparatively well in prison. Nevertheless, the days we had to pass in that old, evil-smelling house of sorrows were interminable. Most of our time we spent together, in a locked-up part of the corridor on the second floor. Outside it was glorious summer weather. All our windows were open to the breeze, which never succeeded in dispersing the stench pervading the whole building. Sitting on the uncomfortable wooden stools, or walking idly about, we smoked incessantly, read desultorily in magazines and books, and talked spasmodically. And always the air vibrated with the

faint, far-away, half-heard, half-sensed muttering of distant guns. The news in the German newspapers was never cheering to us.

As suddenly as we had been arrested we were released from prison after eleven days, and confined to the town.

There followed nine weeks of inactivity and endless waiting. For the first time I gave a fleeting thought to an attempt of making my way out of Germany by stealth. It hardly seemed worth while, as we were "sure of being exchanged sooner or later"! Twice I left the town for a few hours. On my return I always found the police fully conversant with every one of my moves, which showed how carefully they were watching me. Having always provided excellent explanations for my actions, I escaped trouble over these escapades.

As announced beforehand in the German press, we were arrested again on November 6, 1914. We passed four cheery days in the old familiar prison, and then came the excitement of our departure for Ruhleben camp, via Cologne, where we and a hundred and fifty other civilian prisoners, collected from the Rhine provinces, spent a night in a large penal prison.

Under a strong escort we were marched to the station at seven the following morning. Before

starting we had been told that there was only one punishment for misbehavior on transport—death! Misbehavior included leaving the ranks in the streets or leaning out of the windows when in the railway carriages.

Entraining at eight o'clock, we did not reach our final destination until twenty-three hours later. The first hour or so of our journey was tolerable. We were in third-class carriages. Having had hardly any breakfast, and no tea or supper the previous day, we soon became hungry and thirsty. But we were not even allowed to get a drink of water. Whenever the train drew into a station, the Red Cross women rushed toward our carriages with pots of coffee and trays of food, under the impression that we were Germans on the way to join our regiments. But they were always warned off by uniformed officials: "Nothing for those English swine." We were evidently beyond the pale of humanity.

At 2 A.M. we disembarked at Hanover station, to wait two hours for another train. Here a bowl of very good soup was served out to us.

At 7 A.M. on the 12th of November our train drew up at a siding. We were ordered roughly to get out and form fours. It was dark and cold. A thin drizzling rain was falling. Hardly as cheerful as when we left Neuss, we entered Ruhleben camp.

CHAPTER II

RUHLEBEN: THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS

RUHLEBEN! A ride in a trolley car of fifty minutes to the east, and one would have been in the center of Berlin. Toward the west the town of Spandau was plainly visible. Shall we ever forget its sky-line—the forest of chimneys, the tall, ugly outlines of the tower of the town hall, the squat "Julius" tower, the supposed "war treasury" of the Germans where untold millions of marks of gold were alleged to be lying!

Before the war the camp had been a trotting race-course, a model of its kind in the way of appointments. Altogether, six grand stands, a restaurant for the public, a club-house for the members of the Turf Club, administrative buildings, and eleven large stables, all solidly built of brick and concrete, illustrated German thoroughness.

These buildings, except the three smaller grand stands, clustered along the west and south sides of an oval track, which was not at first included in the camp area.

Since the beginning of the war the restaurant, the "Tea House" as it was called, at the extreme western end, and the large halls underneath the three grand stands next to it had been used to house refugees from eastern Prussia. Then, an assorted lot of prisoners of war and civilians interned, preponderantly Russian but with a sprinkling of British and French subjects, had taken their place. A few Russians were still there when we arrived but evacuated very soon after. Their departure made the camp exclusively British.

We were given breakfast. It consisted of a bowl of so-called coffee and a loaf of black bread. The bread was to last us two days. Then we were marched to our palatial residence, Stable No. 5. We set to work to remove the plentiful reminders of the former four-legged inhabitants and installed ourselves as best we might.

The stables contained twenty-four box-stalls and two tiny rooms for stable personnel on the ground floor, and two large hay-lofts above. Six men to a box-stall was the rule, and as many as could be packed into the lofts. I had experience in both quarters, for I slept in the loft for more than a week, and then moved into "Box No. 6," where a space on the floor had become empty. My new quarters were, at first, much

less attractive than the loft. They offered, however, greater possibilities for improvement.

For six weeks we slept on a stone floor covered by an inch or so of wet straw. We had just room enough to lie side by side. We could turn over, if we did so together. The "loftites" slept on boards with straw on top of them. Later we all got ticks into which we could pack the wet and fouling straw. To start with, there was no heating. Then steam-radiators were installed, and during this winter and the three following, the stone barracks were heated in a fitful kind of way. The locomobile boilers which furnished the steam, one for each three or four barracks, delivered it into the radiators from 10 A.M. to 12 noon and from 3 to 5 P.M.

At last the "boxites" received bedsteads. They consisted of a simple iron framework with three-quarter-inch boards as mattresses. On these we placed our ticks. The bed uprights had male and female ends which permitted the building of as many superimposed bunks as seemed practicable. Two sleeping-structures of three bunks each was the rule in the boxes.

The food we received from the Germans was insufficient at any time. The allowance per man for rations was sixty-five pfennigs per day—sixteen cents at the pre-war rate of exchange.

It was contracted for at this price by a caterer.

While food in Germany was plentiful we could buy additions to our rations at the canteen. This became gradually impossible. We did n't mind that much, as parcels containing food and other necessities, but mainly food, began to arrive from England in ever-increasing number. Relatives of prisoners, the firms they had been working for, and trade-unions or other organizations to which they belonged started the ball rolling. But when the real need of the prisoners became known in Blighty, special organizations for the purpose of assisting them sprang up everywhere. As they were independent of one another their work to a great extent overlapped. The majority of the civilians interned received too much; here and there a man received nothing at all. Through the action of the British Government the work of the individual societies was coördinated in November, 1916. From that date, the Order of the Red Cross and St. John was in charge of all of the relief work for prisoners of war, and each prisoner received six parcels of food per lunar month, not counting two loaves of white bread per week.

As far as my experience goes, the German authorities made an effort to have these parcels reach their destination. During the latter part

of my imprisonment deliveries became somewhat irregular. Food was scarce at that time in some parts of Germany and commanded very high prices, and the theft of parcels naturally increased.

Ruhleben camp was administered, at first, by the German officers in charge, with the help of the interned. In the spring of 1916, all of the internal affairs of the camp were placed in the hands of the interned themselves, the Germans confining themselves to guard duties and general supervision.

Much has been published about prisoners' camps in Germany. Horrible stories have been told about them, and these are in the main quite true. But camps differed from one another; nor were the conditions in a given camp always the same. I 'm not suggesting gradual or steady improvement. But, just as camp commanders and regional military commanders differed, so did the treatment of their charges differ. As prisoners of war the men in Ruhleben camp were a pretty lucky lot. The choice flowers of *Kultur* bloomed elsewhere.

In the beginning of our internment hopes of a speedy exchange to England ran high, and so did rumors concerning it. They helped us to en-

dure the hardships of the first few months, hardships which might have proved even less tolerable than they did without some such sheet-anchor of faith.

In spite of the misery of the first winter, however, the majority of the pro-English portion of the camp would at any time have refused a chance of living "free" in Germany under the conditions we experienced previous to our internment. This certainly was the prevailing opinion among my friends, as it was mine. In camp, at any rate, we could wag our tongues, and speak as we listed, if we took only ordinary precautions. We had congenial companions, and shared our joys and discomforts. As long as our health remained tolerable, who would not have preferred this to liberty among German surroundings? But when illness came upon us—and few escaped it altogether—it was rather a tough proposition.

The colonial Britishers were not at first considered to come under the heading "*Englander.*" Probably the Germans were waiting for the disruption of the British Empire and intended to further it by partial treatment of men from our colonies, for they let them remain at liberty until the end of January, 1915.

It was then that the colonials arrived in Ruhleben.

Later came the separation of the sheep from the goats! There was trouble in camp. It had started in a ridiculous manner. A young lad had been overheard saying something about "bloody Germans," and this had been reported to the authorities by one of their spies. German self-esteem was horribly hurt, the more so as they misunderstood the epithet and interpreted it as "bloodthirsty." Whispers of impending trouble had reached us, and we were not astonished when, one morning—I believe in February or March, 1915—the alarm bell sounded the "line up." Each barracks separately formed up in a hollow square in front of its dwelling-place. And each barracks was addressed separately by the camp commander, Baron von Taube. He was in a perfect frenzy of rage when our turn came. Our barracks was one of the last spoken to, and how he managed to keep up the performance after so many repetitions is a thing I cannot easily understand.

"We shall be the victors in this war thrust upon us by your country!" he shouted at us. "And here and now I fling your own expression back into your faces. Bloody Englishmen I call

you! Bloody Englishmen!" He thumped his chest like a gorilla about to charge. He came near to foaming at the mouth. So far it was merely amusing. Then came the order: "All those who entertain friendly feelings toward Germany fall out and hand in your names."

Our barracks was rather a mixed one, many of its inhabitants being pro-German in sentiment. In addition, good and loyal men all over the camp, whose financial interests were entirely in Germany, became panicky and went over to the other side in the futile hope of saving their property. When they had gone to the office, we others were dismissed. Excitedly we discussed what had happened. Many of us were deeply disturbed. They were those who thought they had flung their all into a well, as it were, by standing still when the pro-Germans fell out. But we all hoped that the others would be quartered apart from us.

Unfortunately that was not the case. They came back and lived among us for some time, their presence giving rise to many a quarrel.

Some months afterward another separation of the sheep from the goats took place, much less dramatically, and this time the pro-Germans were quartered all by their sweet selves at one end of the camp.

In April, 1915, two men escaped from the hospital barracks, situated outside the barbed-wire enclosure, and but carelessly guarded. One of them became a great friend of mine later on.

When these two men escaped, I was playing with the idea myself. It was a very fine spring. In the afternoons I used to sit on the uppermost tier of the big grand stand. High up as I was, the factory buildings and chimneys toward the west, where Spandau lay, appeared dwarfed; and gazing across with my book on my knees, I had a sense of freedom. I used to dream extravagant dreams of flights in aëroplanes with Germany gliding backward beneath my feet, with the fat pastures of Holland unrolling from the horizon, with the gray glint of the sea appearing, and the shores of England lying rosy under a westering sun. And then, coming down to realities, I began seriously to speculate upon the chances of "getting through."

I soon came to the conclusion that a companion was desirable, a good man who spoke German well, as I did; a man with plenty of common sense about him. I found one in April, T——, a native of the state of Kansas. Lack of money made an early attempt impossible. I had enough for myself, but my friend was dependent upon the five shillings per week relief money

paid by the British Government to those who had no resources of their own. I could not get hold of sufficient money for the two of us at once, so I set myself to accumulate gradually the necessary amount.

But the summer passed, the leaves began to turn yellow, and my pocket-book still contained less than I thought necessary.

In June of that year a successful escape from camp and from Germany by Messrs. Pyke and Falk set us all talking and wondering. Then, in quick succession, two serious attempts by a couple of men each failed. News was allowed to reach us that they would be kept in solitary confinement until the end of the war. This inhuman punishment was not actually put into effect, but the unfortunates got five months' and four and a half months' solitary confinement respectively, and after that indefinite detention in prison.

My companion and I heard only about the first sentence. It somewhat staggered us; but we decided that, as we did not intend to be caught, the punishment ought not to deter us, and that if we were caught we could stick it out as well as the next man.

The days were growing shorter, the nights

colder, the boughs of the trees barer, and conditions generally more unfavorable, and still we hung on. Then the military authorities began doubling the number of wire fences around the camp and erecting plenty of extra light-standards in the space between them. Also, the number of sentries was increased. All this decided us to have "a shot at it" there and then, before the additional fences were completed.

We had hoped for an overcast sky. Instead, the full moon was bathing the camp in light. Feeling anything but comfortable, we walked up to that part of the wire fence where we intended to scramble over. We were just getting ready, when a sentry came around the corner of the barracks outside the wire. We had never observed the man on that beat before. He stopped short, and his rifle came to the ready. "We're camp policemen, if he asks," I whispered to my companion. Lingering a moment as if in conversation, we then walked slowly away. We decided not to try again that night.

The next morning I was disgusted with myself and all the world. I talked it over with my companion, and he agreed with me that it was "no go" that year. Another week of light

nights would see the wire fences completed and the season so far advanced that the odds would be too heavy against us.

For some days I chewed the bitter cud of disappointment. Then I told my friend that I should be glad to go with him, if he had an opportunity, but that in the meantime I should take any chance, if one came to me, alone. He expressed approval.

CHAPTER III

THE SANATORIUM

TOWARD the end of November an old Scotsman, a member of my barracks (No. 5), was returned to camp from the sanatorium in Charlottenburg. I questioned him about the place. It appeared that no desperate illness was necessary to get there, as long as one was willing to pay for oneself instead of coming down upon the British Government funds ordinarily provided for that purpose.

This institution was a private medical establishment known as Weiler's Sanatorium. The camp administration, by now in our own hands, had made arrangements with the proprietors to receive and treat such cases of illness or ill-health as could not be treated adequately in camp, where the accommodation in the infirmary, measured on civilized standards, was of the roughest.

Having a big scar on my left thigh, the only reminder of a perfectly healed compound fracture many years old, I believed sciatica a likely

complaint to acquire. Except in extreme cases no observable changes take place in the affected limb, and the statement of the patient is the only means of diagnosis. Forthwith I developed a gradually increasing limp. With it I got grumpy and ill-tempered, the limp preventing me from taking my usual exercise, and this soon had its effect.

At regular and short intervals I went to see the doctor. To start with, I got sympathy from him, and aspirin. But nothing did me any good, though I admitted to an occasional improvement when the weather was fine and dry. At last I was taken into the *Schonungsbaracke* and put under a severe course of sweating. I stuck it out, but came dangerously near throwing up the sponge before I was released at the end of a week of it. By that time I had made up my mind that my sciatica ought to be cured, at least temporarily.

I kept away from the doctor for some time, but after a fortnight, during which my limp had gradually increased again, I was back in the surgery. He admitted that under camp conditions a lasting cure, even of a mild case like mine, was hardly to be thought of; but since the Schonungsbaracke was full, there was nothing for me "but to stay in bed as much as

possible'' and to swallow aspirin. This treatment suited me excellently well.

I kept hanging about the surgery complaining mildly until the first days of February, when the weather was rotten. I had a serious attack then. I knew the Schonungsbaracke to be still full, and this gave me the opportunity of asking to be transferred for treatment to the sanatorium.

My case being considered urgent, I left the camp the same afternoon, accompanied by a soldier and a box-mate of mine who had volunteered to carry my luggage—for I was unable, of course, even to lift it. With somewhat mingled feelings I looked my last upon Ruhleben for many a long day.

My new home had originally been intended for nervous cases only—a private lunatic asylum, to put it bluntly. The arrangement with the camp authorities for the treatment of all kinds of ailments among a population of over four thousand was taxing its capacity to the utmost. So many of our men were there at this time that they not only filled the original institution but were housed and treated in several dwellings leased by the proprietors in addition to the asylum.

This was a large building with an extensive

garden at 38 Nussbaum Allee, Charlottenburg. The appellation "Nussbaum Allee" distinguished it from the other houses, of which there were four, if I am not mistaken. I forget their names, however, with the exception of "Linden Allee."

There were two classes of patients, whose food and accommodation differed according to the amount they paid, or which was paid for them by the British Government through the American Embassy. First-class treatment cost at that time twelve marks per day exclusive of medicines and special treatment. Without exception the expense had to be defrayed by the patient himself. In the second-class eight marks per day was charged. Neither class could expect private bedrooms for this, except where infectious ailments or other medical reasons made separate rooms imperative.

I had offered to pay my own expenses, to avoid delay by having my case referred to the American Embassy. It was a matter of indifference to me what class I was put into. The points of comfort I was looking for were easily opened windows, etc. I liked fresh air at any time, but now was particularly impressed by a theory of mine, that fresh air could be admitted in sufficient quantities only by windows not

too high from the ground and large enough to admit, or rather to give exit to, a fairly bulky man.

The windows looked all right, but, from my point of view, they were *not*. They had diamond panes set in cast-iron frames; and even if they opened, a dog could not have got out of the aperture. All the corridor doors were kept constantly locked. There was no passing from one part of the building to another without the help of a warder or a nurse. The idea of having to sleep in the same room with six or eight people, one or two of them seriously ill, did not appeal to me. One of them was always sure to be awake at night. Straightway I applied for first-class treatment, for this would get me sent to the "Linden Allee Villa," where these lunatic-asylum precautions would probably be absent.

I was taken there in the course of the following morning. My assumption proved correct, for things were different. Twelve patients nearly occupied the available accommodation. The staff consisted of only a nurse and three servant girls, and no military guard was about the place. The biggest bedrooms contained three beds. A garden surrounded the house, accessible through at least three doors and a

number of windows of the ordinary French pattern. A low iron railing separated the garden from the streets, which in this part of the town were very wide, and which frequently had two causeways, lined with trees, and divided by stretches of lawn and thick shrubbery.

Not far from "Linden Allee" a big artery ran right into Berlin.

CHAPTER IV

PLANNING THE DETAILS

THE outlines of my plan of escape had been conceived almost a year before in Ruhleben, and had remained unaltered.

Generally speaking, the chances of success were so small that I was convinced it could be achieved only by the elimination of every unnecessary risk, and with a considerable amount of good fortune thrown in to make up for the unavoidable balance on the wrong side.

It must be remembered that we civilians were interned right in the center of Germany. There were three neutral countries to make for: Denmark, Holland, and Switzerland, distant from Ruhleben in that order. My choice fell upon Holland, which, from information I had obtained, seemed to offer the best opportunities.

Denmark, being only about a hundred and fifty miles away, had at first appeared very tempting. But the difficulty of crossing the Kiel Canal, the extraordinarily close watch kept all over Schleswig-Holstein and the frontier, lack of information about the state of affairs

along the Baltic coast, and the obvious difficulty of making a passage in a stolen boat to the nearest point on the Danish coast, twenty-five miles away, decided me against this plan. Switzerland was about six hundred miles distant, and the railway journey, with its attendant dangers, correspondingly long. Also, we had heard that part of the Swiss frontier, at least, was impregnably guarded. There remained Holland, about four hundred miles away.

In view of my thorough knowledge of German, I did not believe the railway journey an impossible undertaking. It appeared more feasible, at any rate, than the four-weeks' tramp to the frontier with what scant food one could carry. Up to the last moment I tried to get information as to whether special passports were necessary for traveling on a train, and whether they would be inspected on taking the ticket, or during the journey. I had contradictory accounts about this.

Having arrived at the sanatorium, I very soon made up my mind to the following mode of procedure: A stay at the "Linden Allee" until the 30th of March would give me about four weeks in which to recruit my health, which was none of the best after a grueling winter in camp. Then, with a new moon on the 1st of April, a

succession of dark nights would be favorable for my purpose. On account of the weather, it might become advisable to delay the start a day or two; but if exceptionally wintry conditions should be prevailing then, a postponement until the moon had again changed through all her phases would become necessary. Trying to imagine conditions near the frontier, I had come to the conclusion that with snow on the ground, giving a considerable range of vision even during the darkest hours of the night, a successful passage through the sentry lines would be out of the question. On the other hand, the nights would be much shorter at the end of April, and this made me nervous lest such a postponement should be forced upon me. The task of getting out of the sanatorium and making my way into Berlin did not trouble me at all. It was as easy as falling off a log. Such of my things as I should deem necessary or very desirable for the exploit, I was going to take with me in a small leather Gladstone bag.

From newspapers I had learned that a train left Berlin for Leipzig at 7 A.M. My absence would probably not be discovered before the first breakfast, served in bed at 7:45 A.M. Thus I could be a good many miles away when the alarm reached headquarters.

Leipzig was not on my direct route toward the Dutch frontier, but it appeared very attractive as my first objective, partly for that reason. It is a big place, and a man could easily pass in the crowd there for a day, while the shops would allow me to complete my equipment with a compass and maps.

In Berlin the sale of the latter was prohibited except with a permit from the army corps commander. This ordinance was savagely enforced and probably strictly observed. Leipzig—the center of the German printing-trade, and, in the Kingdom of Saxony, not in Prussia—was the place where one could hope to obtain them, if anywhere.

In another way the fact of Leipzig being in a different state was in my favor. Any efforts of the Berlin police to recapture me would very likely be retarded if the case had to be handed over to a distinct and independent police organization.

I hoped that when I arrived in Dortmund, some time during the morning following my escape from the sanatorium, I could make my way by slow trains to the small town of Haltern.

This is situated in the northwestern corner of the province of Westphalia on the northern bank of the river Lippe. The nearest part of

Holland from there is only twenty-five miles distant as the crow flies, and no river of any size intervenes, an important consideration for the time of year I had fixed upon. Moreover, it is nowhere near the Rhine. As I had lived in the northern part of the Rhine province, the danger of being accidentally seen by a former acquaintance bade me keep away from that district.

There remained the smaller details of my plan to work out, file, and put together. Some of them were planned and executed before I left camp. For example, I had grown a beard during the winter 1915–16. This altered my appearance and lent itself to another alteration, back to the original. I bethought myself in the "Linden Allee" that the Germans would probably expect me to shave it off. A good reason for not doing so.

The universal practice of the Boches in both civil and military camps was to mark all the clothing of prisoners of war so distinctively that the status of the wearer could be recognized at a glance, if ever he got away. These marks consisted at first of stripes of vivid color painted down the seams of their trousers and around their arms, and fancy figures, circles, triangles, etc., on their backs. Later, stripes of brown material were sewn into the trousers and sleeves,

the original material having first been cut away.

This practice never obtained in Ruhleben, where we were allowed to wear what we liked. During two winters in camp I had made use of a very strong and warm suit of Manchester cord. It was now considerably the worse for wear, bleached by sun and rain and darkened again by mud and grease, rather conspicuous in its state of dilapidation, and, in camp, very distinctly connected with me. For months I had kept hidden in my trunk an inconspicuous gray jacket suit. When I went to the sanatorium it was packed away under other things at the bottom of my hand-bag. All the time at the villa I wore my cord suit, explaining that I had no other clothes, but was waiting for some on the way from England. I must have cut a very queer figure among my companions, but any one among them could conscientiously swear, after my departure, that I must have left in a brown cord suit, for, obviously, I had no other. The good ulster overcoat I intended to make use of could hardly give me away. Probably half a million similar ones were being worn in Germany at that time.

After the first week in March, winter set in again and held the land for a fortnight. Then,

abruptly, spring burst upon us—that glorious early spring of 1916 with its long succession of sunny, warm days and crisp, starlit nights.

A change in the number and distribution of the inmates had left me with only one companion in our bedroom. He was confined to bed with heart disease. I became rather nervous lest my unexpected disappearance and the following inevitable investigation should upset him. To minimize this possible shock I took him into my confidence.

As "the day" approached I got my things ready as unobtrusively as I could, gradually packing my small grip and finally destroying letters and private papers. It was then that my room-mate showed the first signs of unfeigned interest.

"Why," he exclaimed, suddenly, "so you meant it, after all! Pardon my having been incredulous so far, but I've heard so many fellows talk about what they intended to do, without ever seeing anybody doing it that I did n't quite realize you were the exception that proves the rule. Don't worry about me, and the best of luck to you."

The limp with which I had arrived at the sanatorium I had gradually relinquished as I announced improvements in my condition. It was

to be resumed on the journey as a sort of disguise, an unasked-for explanation for my not being in the army.

I had put aside some food, namely, a big German smoked sausage, still obtainable though very expensive, and containing a considerable amount of nourishment, a tin of baked beans, some biscuits, some chocolate, and a special anti-fatigue preparation. A green woolen shirt, a thick sweater, two pairs of socks, an extra set of underclothing, a stout belt, and a naval oilskin, filled the bag almost to the bursting-point. Watch, electric torch, knife, and money were to be carried on my person.

About this time my first monthly account was due from the sanatorium. I dared not ask for it, neither could I leave without paying. Apart from the moral aspect of vanishing and leaving an unsettled bill behind, such an act would certainly have resulted in criminal proceedings against me for theft or larceny, in the event of my being captured, and, according to the German application of the law where Englishmen were concerned, as certainly in conviction with a maximum sentence. So I decided to leave enough money in a drawer of my dressing-table to cover my bill.

CHAPTER V

A GLIMPSE OF FREEDOM

CONTRARY to my expectations, I hardly felt any excitement during my last day at the "Linden Allee." My mental attitude was rather a disinterested one, as if I were watching somebody else's escape.

When I got into bed at the usual time, I immediately fell asleep, having first made up my mind to wake at 3:30 A.M. I awoke an hour sooner, and went to sleep again. It was close on four o'clock when I opened my eyes for the second time. Getting up noiselessly, I carried the Gladstone and a big hand-bag containing my clothes, boots, etc., into the bath-room on the first floor. There I lathered my shaving brush and shaved a few hairs off my left forearm, leaving the safety-razor on the washstand, uncleaned, to create the impression that I had shaved off my beard. I dressed as rapidly as I could, throwing my pajamas on the floor and leaving generally a fair amount of disorder behind me. A breathless trip to the loft of the house to conceal my cord suit behind some beams

was executed with as much speed and caution as I could manage. With my bag in one hand and my boots round my neck, I descended again by the light of the electric torch, slipped into my overcoat in the hall, and, snatching my hat from the rack, entered the dining-room. From there a French window gave upon a porch to which a few steps led up from the garden. The window offered no resistance and, fortunately, the protecting roller-blind was not down. A few women, probably ammunition workers, passed the house, and when they were out of hearing I stepped out.

It was still dark, though the dawn was heralded in the east. In a spot previously selected for the reason that it was screened by bushes, and from which I could survey the street without being seen, I got over the fence. I had barely done so when a cough sounded some distance behind me. With a chill racing up and down my spine, I walked on. Turning the near corner, I threw a hasty glance over my shoulder, but could see no one. Nevertheless, I thought it wise to walk back on my tracks around several blocks, before I made for the big thoroughfare which led toward Berlin.

A number of people were about, men and women, going to work. Keeping on, I came

after a lapse of about fifteen minutes to a station of the Elevated. It was now five o'clock.

When I went up the steps to the booking-hall, night was slowly withdrawing before the vanguard of the approaching day. The electric lights in the streets flashed once and were dead. In the station they were beginning to show pale and ineffective.

To my relief, people were entering the station with me. Obviously, there was a service of trains thus early, though I had been in doubt about it till then. The taking of a ticket to Friedrich Strasse Station, one of the chief stations in Berlin, cost me some agitation. It meant the first test of my ability to "carry on."

"Friedrich Strasse! Ten minutes to six! I must find the restaurant and have breakfast." There is no sense in neglecting the innner man; no experienced campaigner will voluntarily risk it.

Friedrich Strasse was a most uncomfortable place to be in. It swarmed with soldiers, and its intricate passages and stairs were plastered with placards: "Station Provost Marshal," "Military Passport Office," "Passports to be shown here," "For Military only."

At last I found a snug little waiting-room and restaurant, where I got a fairly decent meal, in-

cluding eggs, which at the time were still obtainable without ration-cards, and rolls, for which I ought to have delivered up some bread-tickets, but did n't. As soon as I had a chance, I bought a newspaper and some cigarettes. Either might help one over an awkward moment.

The train for Leipzig left from a station I knew nothing about except the name. The easiest way for me to get there was by cab. A number of these were standing in front of Bahnhof Friedrich Strasse.

"Anhalter Bahnhof," I said curtly to the driver of the first four-wheeler on the rank. Cabby mumbled something about *Marke* through a beard of truly amazing wildness. Then only did I recollect that it is necessary before taking a cab from a station rank in Berlin to obtain a brass shield, with its number, from a policeman stationed inside the booking-hall. Back I went, overcoming as best I might the terrifying aspect of the blue uniform close to me. Fortunately, the man was extraordinarily polite for a Prussian officer of the law, and inquired solicitously what particular kind of cab I should like, and whether it was to be closed or open. It was to be closed.

I had twenty minutes to spare after I

alighted from the cab in front of my destination. This station appeared less crowded than the former one, although a considerable number of soldiers were in, or passing through, the big hall. The moment had come when one of the main points of my plan was to be put to the test. Could I obtain a long-distance ticket without a passport? I waited until several people approached the booking-office, then lined up behind them. One of them asked for a second-class ticket to Leipzig, and got it without any formality. I considered myself quite safe when I repeated his demand.

The train, a corridor-express, was crowded. The hour was early for ordinary people, and nobody seemed in the least talkative. To guard against being addressed, I had bought enough German literature of the bloodthirsty type to convince anybody of my patriotic feelings, but I hardly looked at it. I was too much interested in watching the country flashing past the window and in speculating upon what it would be like near the Dutch frontier.

At Leipzig, where we arrived at 9:30 A.M., I had my little Gladstone taken to the cloak-room by a porter, to give more verisimilitude to my limp. For the same reason I made it my first business to buy a stout walking-stick at the

nearest shop. After that I got a good luminous compass, whose purchase was another test case. When it was treated as an everyday transaction by the man behind the counter my spirits rose, and the acquisition of maps appeared a less formidable undertaking. Nevertheless, I resolved to leave their purchase to the afternoon. Should I find that suspicion was aroused by my request for "a good map of the province of Westphalia," I intended to nip away on the earliest train, if I could reach the station unarrested.

The rest of the morning I spent limping through the town, keeping very much on the alert all the time. The tortuous, narrow streets of the inner town, with their old high-gabled houses in curious contrast with the modern buildings and clanging tram-cars, were a delight to me as well as a difficulty; the latter in so far as I had to keep account of my whereabouts, the better to be able to act swiftly in an emergency. Gradually I got into more modern streets, wide and straight. In passing I had made a mental note of a likely-looking restaurant to have lunch in later on.

At last I found myself in a public park, where I rested on a seat for some time. A shrewd wind, which whistled through the bare branches

of the trees, made me wrap myself tighter in my greatcoat.

I started to walk back to the restaurant at midday, following for the greater part of the way in the wake of three fat and comfortable-looking burghers, who were deciding the war and the fate of nations in voices loud enough for me to follow their conversation, although thirty paces behind. In the restaurant I had a meal, somewhat reduced in quality and quantity, for a little more than I should have paid in peace times. Over a cigarette I then started to look up my evening train in the time-table I had bought at the station. Unable to find what I wanted, I grew hot and cold all over. I had by no means speculated upon having to stay in any town overnight, and should not have known how to act had I been forced to do so. This question had to be settled there and then, so I went to the station and the inquiry office. I was told that I could get a train at 7:50 or 8 P.M.—I forget which—to Magdeburg, and from there catch the express for the west to Dortmund.

The first part of the afternoon I spent in several cafés, unhappy to be within four walls, yet wanting to rest as much as possible. Toward five o'clock I nervously set forth to buy the maps and some other less important things. I passed

several booksellers' shops with huge war-maps displayed in the windows, but my feet, seemingly of their own volition, carried me past them. When I finally plucked up enough courage to enter a shop, my apprehension proved quite unnecessary. I came away with a fine motor-map and another one, less useful generally but giving some additional information. After that the rest of my equipment was rapidly acquired: a pair of night binoculars, wire-clippers, a knapsack, a very light oilskin, and a cheap portmanteau to carry these things in. By a fortunate chance I saw some military water-bottles in a shop window, which reminded me that I had nearly overlooked this very important part of a fugitive's rig-out. I got a fine aluminum one.

By this time it was getting dark. The best way of spending what remained of my time in Leipzig was to have a leisurely meal in the station restaurant.

While I was waiting to be served, a well-dressed man at a table opposite attracted my attention. He came into the room soon after me, and seemed to take a suspicious interest in my person. He stared at me, openly and otherwise. When he did the former, I tried to outstare him. After he had twice been worsted in

this contest he kept a careful but unobtrusive watch over the rest of the people in the restaurant, but took no further notice of me, not even when I crossed the room later on to buy at the counter as many sweet biscuits and as much chocolate as I dared. After that I sat reading a book with a lurid cover whereon a German submarine was torpedoing a British man-of-war among hectic waves. Taking advantage of the short-sightedness implied by my glasses, I held it close to my eyes, so that onlookers might have the benefit of the soul-inspiring cover, and look at that instead of my face.

A porter, whom I had tipped sufficiently to make it worth his while, came to fetch my luggage and see me into the train, where I had a compartment to myself. As soon as we were moving, I executed a wild but noiseless war-dance to relieve my overcharged feelings, and then had my first good look at the maps.

At Magdeburg I had only a few minutes to wait for the express to Belgium, which was to arrive at midnight. It turned out to be split into three sections, following each other at ten-minute intervals. I took the first of the trains. The second-class compartment I entered was occupied by an officer of the A. M. C. and two non-commissioned officers. The latter soon left us,

having bribed the guard, so it seemed, to let them go into the first-class. In this way the medical officer and I had the whole compartment to ourselves. We lay down at full length, and I slept with hardly an interruption until 4:30, half an hour before the train was due at Dortmund.

At Dortmund the waiting-room I went to was almost empty. I left my luggage in the care of a waiter, and went out to have a wash and brush-up. This expedition gave me an opportunity to learn something about the station before I got a fresh ticket. I saw that to do this I should have to pass ticket-gates which were in charge of an extraordinarily strong guard with fixed bayonets. The importance of Dortmund as a manufacturing town, coupled with its situation in the industrial district of the West, the vulnerable point of Germany, explained these precautions.

Back in the waiting-room, a liquid called coffee and a most unsatisfactory kind of war bread had to take the place of a Christian breakfast. From the time-table I learned that there was a local train to Wanne at about 6:30. It just missed connection with another one from Wanne to Haltern, if I recollect rightly. The prospect of having to wait over two hours in a small town on the edge of the industrial district, before I

could get a train, was not particularly inviting, but there was no alternative. My ticket was taken only at the last minute; then Dortmund was left behind.

For most of the way to Wanne I traveled in the company of two young civilians, massively built and pictures of health. When they had left I hastily packed my impedimenta in the new portmanteau, leaving the Gladstone empty, with the intention of depositing it in a cloakroom as the best means of getting rid of it without leaving a clue.

Having arrived at Wanne at eight o'clock, I handed my two pieces of luggage in at the cloakroom window, asking for a separate ticket for each.

The man behind the counter, to whom I took a great dislike from that moment, stared at me in silence for some seconds, until I could no longer stand it, and started a lame explanation: I wanted to leave the small bag for a friend of mine to fetch later on from whom I had borrowed it in the town about a week ago, name of Hugo Schmidt. The other I would take away with me as soon as my business in Wanne was finished. The fib sounded unconvincing enough to my own ears. The wooden face of my antagonist on the other side of the window gave

no indication of thoughts or emotions. All that mattered really was that he gave me two tickets, and that I found myself in the street still unarrested but feeling unaccountably hot.

Walking as briskly as my limp would permit, I wandered about the streets, diving into a factory yard here and the hall of an office building there, as if I were a commercial traveler, taking good care not to linger long enough for other people to become interested in me.

All the time I felt uncomfortable and dissatisfied with my performance at the station and the pretense I was putting up, and thus it came about that the photograph of a friend of mine in Ruhleben disintegrated under my fingers in my pocket, to be dropped bit by bit into the road, lest, if I were arrested, the original should get into trouble.

It was a relief when ten o'clock was past and train-time approached. I got my portmanteau from my friend in the cloak-room, who was fortunately busy with other people, and got into an empty compartment. Between stations, during the twenty-minute run, I looked at my maps, to form an idea of how best to get out of Haltern in the right direction.

This small town is about half a mile from the station, which is an important railway junction.

I was quite unacquainted with this part of the province of Westphalia. The maps showed it as not too thickly populated, with plenty of woods dotted all over it, and plenty of water.

The train thundered over the big railway bridge crossing the river Lippe and drew into the station, and I, feeling pretty good, landed on the platform with something like a skip and a jump, until I recollected my leg. Then slowly I limped after the other people the train had disgorged. In front of me I could see the church steeple rising above the roofs of the compact little town in the middle distance. Halfway toward it I passed a detachment of English Tommies sitting on top of a fence, smoking pipes and cigarettes. About an equal number of Poilus were standing close to them, laughing and criticizing the appearance of the passing women. The only guard I could discover was leaning sleepily against a tree on the opposite side of the road. I suppressed an almost overwhelming desire to exchange greetings, and passed them instead with a stony stare.

CHAPTER VI

IN HIDING

IT was a sunny, warm day, and there was no difficulty about finding one's bearings. In the market-place a sign "To Wesel" directed me up a narrow street of humble dwellings on my left. Just outside the town a number of roads met. Without looking at the directions on a mile-stone, I surveyed the country before me for suggestions as to my next move. The most important thing was to get to cover as quickly as possible, and to withdraw from the sight of man. Never mind about striking the right route now. That could wait until a thorough study of the maps gave me a better grasp of the situation. The most favorable-looking road led past a number of cottages and then ran in a northwesterly direction between a low range of hills. A footpath branching off toward a copse on my left seemed to offer the double attraction of a solitary walk and a short cut to a hiding-place. It took me about a hundred yards along the rear of the cottages, and then rejoined the

parent road at a point where the woods came down to it.

As soon as a corner of the copse sheltered me, I gave a last look up and down the deserted road, and a moment later the branches of the half-grown firs closed crackling behind me.

Loaded as I was with a thick overcoat and a heavy bag, I was fairly bathed in perspiration before I had penetrated sufficiently far into the thicket to feel safe. The branches were so interlaced that only the most realistic wormlike wriggle was effective as a means of propulsion, and even then progress was accompanied by a crackling noise which I was anxious to avoid.

Satisfied at last, I stood up and looked about me. From the pin-pricks of light toward the east, I concluded that the spot I stood on was not far from the margin of the copse where it bordered upon a plowed field. On all other sides was a dead wall of brown and green. Underfoot the ground was sopping wet, for the spring sun had no power as yet to penetrate down to where the brown needles and a tangle of black and moldering grass of last year's growth would soon be covered by the shoots of the new spring. Wet and black, the lower branches of the young trees were things of the past, but higher up they stretched their arms

heavenward clothed in their dark green needles. The tops of the firs were glistening like green amber where they swayed slightly in the clear sunlight, forming delicate interlacing patterns beneath the pale spring sky.

Resting and preparing for my night's walk, or poring over my maps, I spent the day there. A mouthful of food now and again was all I could swallow, for I was parched with thirst. The fast walk in the warm sun had started it, and the knowledge that there was no chance of assuaging it before the small hours of the next morning made it worse. I had not dared to fill my water-bottle at any of the stations for fear of being seen and arousing suspicion.

Most of the day my ears were continually on the alert, not so much from fear of discovery as for sounds which might convey useful information. The road leading past my hiding-place seemed little used; the rumble of a cart reached me only very occasionally. From the shrill cries of playing children, and the cackling of hens, I surmised the existence of several farm-houses farther along.

Before lying down I had put on my second set of underwear and discarded my white shirt, collar, and tie, for a green woolen shirt and a dark muffler, which did away with any but neutral col-

ors on my person. Oilskins, oilsilks, overcoat, food, etc., were to be packed in the knapsack on breaking camp. Whatever would be wanted during the march, such as compass, maps, electric torch, and a small quantity of biscuits and chocolate, I stowed away in convenient pockets. The maps I cut into easily handled squares, discarding all the superfluous parts. When the sun had disappeared and gloom was gathering under the trees, I slung the water-bottle from my belt, the binoculars from my neck, and then crept to the edge of the copse, there to wait for the night.

Concealed behind some bushes, I watched the road, which gradually grew more indistinct. The roofs of the town, huddled in the hollow, lost their definite outlines. One after another lights sprang up behind the windows. The children's voices became fewer, then ceased. Sound began to carry a great distance; the rumble of a railway train, the far-away barking of a dog. Twinkling stars came out in the heavens. It was time to start.

At 8:30 I scrambled out of my hiding-place and gained the road, where I set my face toward the west after a last glance at Haltern with its points of light. Two farmhouses, perfectly dark even at this early hour of the night, soon

lay behind me. Here the forest came down to the road on my left while fields bordered it on the right, and, perhaps eighty yards distant, the wooded hills arose. Whether it was a sort of sixth sense which gave me warning, I do not know, but a strong feeling that I was not safe on the road made me walk over the fields into the shadow of the trees, from where I could watch without being seen. My figure had hardly merged into this dark background, when silently a shadowy bicycle rider flitted along the road, going in my direction. He carried no lamp, and might have been a patrol.

The going on the plowed fields being rather difficult, I soon grew impatient of my slow progress and returned to the road, proceeding along it in perfect serenity henceforth. It rose gradually. Checking its direction by a glance at the stars now and again, I soon noticed a decided turn to the northwest. This proved beyond doubt that it could not be the turnpike to Wesel, which throughout its length ran due west.

After perhaps an hour of hard going, a signpost loomed ghostly white through the darkness, to spring into sharp relief in the light from the torch. "Klein Recken 2½ hours," it read. A consultation of the map then showed that I was on a far more favorable road than I had antici-

pated, and that a brook flowing close to the hither side of the village of Klein Recken might be reached at about midnight, if I kept my speed. I needed no further inducement.

I was now ascending the last spur of the hills which had fronted me on coming out of Haltern. My way lay mostly through woods, with occasional clearings where the dark outlines of houses and barns showed against the sky. Only occasionally was a window feebly lit as if by a night-light. Often dogs gave warning of my approach and spread the alarm far and wide.

It was a most glorious night, the sky a velvet black, the stars of a brilliancy seldom seen in western Europe. Their luster seemed increased when I found myself hedged in by a tall forest through which the road wound as through a cañon. A bright planet hung fairly low just in front of me, and in the exuberance of my feelings I regarded it as my guiding star.

On the ascent the night air was deliciously cool, not cold, with occasional warmer puffs laden with the scent of pines, the unseen branches and sere leaves of which whispered softly. Seldom have I felt so great a sense of well-being as I had during the first hours of that night. Never again while I was in Germany—whether in camp, in prison, or on other ventures

—did I feel quite so happy, so free from all stress, so safe.

Just before coming to the top of the ridge I found another sign-post pointing one arm into the forest as the shortest route to Klein Recken. The light of the torch revealed a narrow footpath disappearing into impenetrable blackness. I eased myself of my knapsack and rested for ten minutes, eating some biscuits and chocolate, which made me more thirsty than ever. It must have been colder than I thought, for on resuming my burden I found it covered with a thin sheet of ice.

Striking into the footpath, I found a rather liberal use of the torch necessary. The path descended steeply at first, then more gradually. The tall timber changed to smaller trees and thickets. An occasional railway train rumbled in the distance; yet for over an hour the country was empty of human dwellings. Then several houses, widely apart, announced the neighborhood of a village. A tinkling sound made me lengthen my already swinging stride until I stood on a stone bridge. The low murmur of water below was very pleasant in my ears. But that was not the only sound. Something was stirring somewhere, but my dry tongue and throat would not be denied any longer. Clam-

bering over a barbed-wire fence into a meadow, I looked for a place from which I could reach the stream, which had steep banks. Engaged in tying my water-bottle to my walking-stick to lower it into the water, I heard footsteps approaching. The darkness was sufficient concealment, and I merely kept motionless as two men crossed the bridge, one of whom, from the scraps of talk I could distinguish, appeared to be the village doctor, who was being fetched to a patient.

When they had gone, I lowered my water-bottle. It seemed a very long time filling, the bubbles breaking the surface with a wonderfully melodious sound. And then I drank and drank, filled it again, and almost emptied it a second time. When I turned away, it was hanging unwontedly heavy against my hip.

In front of me was Klein Recken. The road I had been following up to now terminated here. It was miles to the north of where I expected to be at this time, when I started out, but that much nearer to the frontier. My plans for the night had been upset by my getting on this favorable road, nor could I look at my maps. The use of the torch so near to habitations was out of the question. I had a pretty good idea, however, of what I should have seen, had I dared.

A railway line ran through the village. After crossing this, I should have to trust to my guiding star and to my ability to work across-country.

Instead of the level crossing I was looking for, I came unexpectedly upon a tunnel in a very high embankment. With bated breath I tiptoed through, more than half expecting to meet a sentry on the other side. The footpath which emerged from it proved an unreliable guide. It soon petered out and left me stranded in front of a barbed-wire fence and a ditch. The cross-country stretch was on.

The going over plowed fields was easy in comparison, but they formed only a part of the country I was traveling over. Frequent patches of forest forced me to skirt them, with time lost on the other side to make the necessary corrections. Repeatedly I sank half-way to my knees into slough and water. Several casts were often necessary to get round these places, for, overgrown with weeds, and in the darkness, the swampy pieces looked like firm meadows. For a time, a sort of wall formed of rough stones accompanied me, with marshy ground on one side and forest on the other. It seemed to run in all directions. As soon as I lost it, I came upon it again. I kept going as fast as

possible all the time; yet hour after hour passed, and still the bewildering procession of woods and fields, swamps and meadows continued.

A phenomenon of which I was ignorant at the time, but which is well known to sailors, kept me busy conjecturing. It is an impression one gets at night, on level ground, or at sea, that one is going decidedly up-hill. In my case this introduced a disturbing factor into my calculations as to my position.

After tacking through a forest over checkerboard clearings the meaning of which was hidden from me, for they were hardly paths or roads, I came out upon a path, and heard water bubbling out of the bank on my right. "More haste less speed. Take it easy," I murmured to myself, dropping the haversack. Then I bent down to the spring and, having drunk as much as I needed, and eaten a mouthful of food, I did some of the hardest thinking of my life.

So far as I recollect, my watch showed just 3:20 A.M. I went minutely over all my movements since leaving Klein Recken. Although the road, which I expected would lie across my course, had not yet materialized, I was confident that I had kept my direction fairly well. It was the impossibility of calculating one's speed

across-country which caused the uncertainty as to my whereabouts.

Fortunately, there was no doubt that a turnpike was not many miles to the north of me. To reach it, and thus ascertain my position, meant leaving the present route to the frontier. With less than two hours of darkness before the dawn, which would force me into hiding, the former factor was of far greater importance than the latter.

My nerves had been getting a little shaky under the stress. I had to press my hands to my head in order to think logically, and to exert all my will-power to keep my heart steady. Oh, for a companion! The effort cleared my brain and soothed me. I was almost cheerful when I went on.

Opposite a farmhouse, the path divided and my way became a miry and deeply rutted cart track. Past another farm, it entered a swampy meadow through a gate and disappeared. Savage at being tricked again, I wheeled round to look for the other fork of the track, but was arrested by seeing a light in the window of the farmhouse where a big dog had given the alarm when I passed. This was the last straw. Clenching my teeth, I crouched behind the hedge, an insensate fury making my ears sing.

For the moment, having lost all control of myself, I was more than ready to meet man or dog, or both, and fight it out on the spot. But that feeling passed quickly.

The noise of a door being opened came to my ears. A lantern was borne from the house and obscured again. Another door opened, and the footsteps of a horse sounded on cobbles, followed by the jingling of harness. Then a cart started out into the dark. Where a cart could go there must be a road; so I followed after, stumbling over ruts and splashing through puddles, and running when the horse broke into a trot.

The cart drew up in front of a building, of which I could see only patches of the front wall where the lantern light struck. Followed the noise of heavy things dumped into the vehicle. Then it started again—back toward where I was standing. Thoroughly exasperated, I turned on my heel and walked back over the road I had come, careless whether I was seen or not. I soon drew away, tried to work round in a circle, and presently came upon a road once more.

What a relief it was to feel even ground under my feet! A little way farther on, and a sign-post pointing in opposite directions along the road, read: "Klein Recken 8 Km., Heiden

2 Km." Out with the map. There was the road, which I had overlooked entirely so far, as it was very faintly marked. With satisfaction I saw that I had kept my direction admirably; but it was annoying to perceive that my course had lain parallel to it all the time, probably never more than a mile away. Making for the village, only about twenty minutes ahead, I could in good time reach a desolate, high plateau, where cover very likely could be found.

In Heiden, a compact little village, my footfalls rang loudly in the cobbled streets. There was no sign of life about the place, and special precautions seemed entirely superfluous. I walked past the church and struck right into the high road I was looking for, which was easily recognizable by its direction and the fact that it began immediately to ascend the plateau.

The worst of my troubles over for the night, the fact that I was tired, not so much muscularly as mentally, became only too apparent as I trudged along. I started talking to myself, imitating tricks of speech of my late companions at the sanatorium, and making up whole dialogues. This continued as long as I followed the turnpike mechanically, although I was perfectly

aware of the absurdity of my behavior and tried to stop it.

The sky was now paling in the east, and about two miles out of Heiden I started to look for cover. For three quarters of an hour I kept leaving the road for likely-looking woods, always to find farmhouses concealed behind them.

Several times, while I was standing among the trees, and peering anxiously about me, white-robed figures appeared to execute weird dances between the trunks, only to dissolve into nothing on my approach to investigate them. Friends of mine had similar experiences to relate, when later on we met in prison and swapped yarns about our adventures.

The light was increasing apace, when a tall pine wood loomed up on my left. Bursting through the bushes fringing it, I proceeded a little way in, until I came to a deep, dry ditch marking its margin, and fairly effectively concealed by bushes. I had the fir woods on my left; on my right was a patch of land bounded by a wire fence and grown over by small firs and thornless furze. A little farther up, some of the furze had been cut and was lying on the ground. An examination of the stumps showed them black and weathered; there was no sign

of recent work. Beyond the wire fence, and across a plowed field, a farm lay more than half concealed in its orchard.

Gathering as much as I could of the furze in my arms, I carried it to a place where the ditch was particularly deep and well concealed. Two trips sufficed to provide me with the necessary amount. Arranging the furze in the approved fashion, lengthways and across, I soon had an excellent spring-mattress in the bottom of the ditch. Undressing, I donned the dry sweater next my skin, and put all the garments I had by me over it, for the air was bitingly cold.

A last deep draft from the water-bottle, a careful wriggle to get on my couch, and I fell asleep instantly.

I awoke without a start, and with every sense alert, after barely two hours, wonderfully refreshed and not in the least stiff. The sun was low in the sky and shone like a big red disk through the morning mist. Pale-golden shafts of light penetrated into the pillared hall underneath the dark green dome of the majestic firs. It was very cold, but to me it appeared only like the refreshing sting of a cold bath. Without going to sleep again, I lay motionless, every muscle relaxed, while the sun climbed higher.

As it did so, the air grew warmer, the scent of the pines became stronger, while the earthy smell of the ground suggested the new life of spring and the stirring of sap in the growths around me.

Toward eleven, an early bumble-bee paid me a visit of inspection, and took himself off again after the bungling fashion of his tribe. The cooing of wood-pigeons close to me assured me of my perfect solitude. Once a kestrel flashed across the ditch and disappeared with a startled twist of wings and tail on catching sight of me. The roar of guns miles away seemed louder and louder, but the sound was not near enough to merit any attention on my part.

When the ditch was in the full light of the sun, I rolled out of my coverings to spend a most glorious day in perfect contentment, eating a little, husbanding my water as well as I could, smoking, and looking at my maps. The next night I hoped would see me across the border. I meant to pass through a village about four miles down the road, and—but that does not matter. What mattered was that I forgot that the day was Saturday, and that people would be likely to remain about much longer than on ordinary week-days.

The shadows were meeting in the shelter of

the woods when I worked my way back to the road. Tiny night-prowlers were already following their business and either scampered noisily away, or froze into the immobility of fear, as my clumsy feet crashed through their domain. From behind some bushes close to it I watched the white ribbon of the road until it was almost blotted out by the darkness, and then set forth.

CHAPTER VII

FAILURE

MY water-bottle wanted filling. A spring bubbling up by the roadside gave me the opportunity. That was a mile or so down the road. I had got again into the swinging stride of the night before, and the few miles to the village of Vehlen were soon covered. A sudden turn of the road near it brought me opposite a building looking like a flour-mill. An electric light was blazing at its corner. On the other side of the road its rays were reflected by the oily ripples on a large pond, the farther side of which was hidden in the darkness.

Perhaps the strain and loneliness of the last few days were telling upon me without my being aware of it. At any rate, I did not realize that the light was a danger-signal flaunted by Providence into my very face. It never occurred to me that on seeing it I ought to get off the road at once and work around the village across-country. Instead, with the experience of last night at the back of my mind, I held on stubbornly and never realized my

folly until I was fairly in the main street.

Most of the houses were lighted and a number of street lamps going. Several people were passing between houses. It was too late to turn back when I saw what I had done. Two old men in front of me, whom I had caught up with, caused me to adapt my pace to theirs so as not to pass them. They turned a corner, I after them, when from the opposite direction a bicycle appeared. The rays of its lamp blinded me. I dared not look back when it had passed, but hurried on as fast as I could short of running. After an eternity of a few minutes somebody jumped off a bicycle at my shoulder, having come up noiselessly from behind. He touched me.

"Who are you?" An armed soldier stood before me.

I gave a name.

"Where do you come from?"

"I belong to Düsseldorf."

"So. Where do you come from now?"

"From Borken."

"But you are not on the road from Borken!"

I knew that, but no other name had occurred to me. What I ought to have said was "Bocholt," I think.

"I am not bound to follow what you call the

direct road, and, anyway, what do you mean by stopping me and questioning me in this fashion?"

"Where are you bound for?"

For want of anything better, I created the imaginary country house of an imaginary noble.

"Don't know it," said the soldier, eyeing me doubtfully and scratching his head.

By this time a crowd had collected around us. Additions to it, mostly children, were shooting full speed round the nearest corners, as I saw out of the corner of my eye, helm hard a-port and leaning sideways to negotiate the turn. But I was already hemmed in by four or five stalwarts. Outside the crowd a small man was dancing excitedly up and down demanding that I be taken before the Amtmann, the head of the village. This man turned out to be the village doctor, the cyclist who had passed me. "What a disagreeable, foxy face the chap has," flashed through my mind. The soldier was obviously still in doubt about me, but was overruled in spite of all the arguments I could think of.

With the soldier by my side, two stalwarts in front and three behind, and surrounded by the throng, I was marched through the streets. We drew up before a farmlike building, and po-

litely but firmly I was urged to enter. We went into a big room on the ground floor. Two desks, several chairs and tables, and file cabinets made up the furniture. A telephone was attached to the wall next the door.

A young man jumped up from his chair in front of one of the desks, and he, and those who had entered with me, regarded me suspiciously for a moment without speaking. Then the young man—he seemed a clerk—caught sight of the binoculars half concealed under my coat lapels. With the shout, "He is a spy!" he rushed upon me, and with a quick movement of his hand tore open my coat and waistcoat.

"Here, keep your dirty paws off me!" I grunted angrily.

He stepped back. At this moment the Amtmann came in, a young and gentlemanly looking chap. My assailant at once collapsed in a chair, and tried to assume a judicial attitude with pen in hand and paper in front of him. Then they searched me, and the fat was in the fire. There was, of course, no sense in continuing the bluffing game, when maps, compasses, and some letters addressed to me in Ruhleben were on the table. I had carried the latter as additional evidence of my identity for the British consul, should I get through. What they did

not find was my British passport. That was cunningly, I think, and successfully concealed.

The business part of the performance being over, they became more genial. The Amtmann asked me whether or not I was hungry. "No." Should I like a cup of coffee? "I should, and a smoke, please." With the aid of two cups of coffee and three of my cigarettes, I pulled myself together as best I might.

The soldier who had stopped me was in the highest of spirits about the big catch he thought he had made, and obviously wanted all the credit to himself. Perhaps he expected the usual leave granted for the apprehension of fugitive prisoners of war, and the ten or fifteen marks of monetary recognition. In his anxiety to establish his claim, he forgot all about the indecision and hesitancy he had shown to start with.

"I knew you immediately for an Englander! That nose of yours!"

I have the most ordinary face and nose, and I am of no particular type, but I nodded with deep understanding.

"Where did you intend crossing the frontier?" he rattled on.

I pointed it out to him on the map lying on the table.

"You 'd never have got across there," he

vouchsafed triumphantly. "In addition to the ordinary sentries and patrols, there are dogs and cavalry patrols at that point, and to the north of it."

If only I could have got that information under different circumstances!

"What beautiful maps you 've got, and what a fine compass! Would it—would it—would you think me cheeky if I asked you for it as a memento?"

Considering that it would be lost to me anyway, I expressed my pleasure at being able to gratify his desire. And then the Amtmann gave me to understand that it was time to be locked up.

The interview at the office had lasted some time, and the noses which had flattened themselves against the outside of the windows had decreased in number. Still, there was a fairly strong guard of adults and children to accompany us to the village lockup.

This was a small building consisting only of one floor. Here I observed for the first time another small man with sharp features who unlocked the door. It was, of course, dark about us, and at this distance it is difficult to determine what I saw then and what I learned in the course of the following day.

We entered through a big door into a place where a fire-engine—a hand-pump—was standing. A door on the left having been unlocked, the Amtmann and the small man preceded me through it. The light of their electric torches revealed a cell, with a sort of bed along one side, consisting of a straw paillasse on some raised boards and two blankets rolled up at the foot of it.

They had left me in possession of my overcoat, oilskins, oilsilk, and sweater, so I should be all right, though the night was very cold. Alone in the cell in pitch darkness, I heard the key turn in the lock, the footfalls recede, the outer door close; then all was silent.

As my eyes grew accustomed to the darkness, I could make out a small window at my right, shoulder-high, and traversed by the black streaks of three vertical iron bars. The cell was so dark that I had the impression of being in a vast black hall. I took three steps forward and rapped my nose against the wall. Very miserable and much disappointed, almost in despair, I groped to the window and shook the bars with all my strength. They were firm and unyielding. Feeling my way to the bed, I put on all my things, disdaining the blankets, which felt filthy, then lay down and was soon asleep.

CHAPTER VIII

A NEW HOPE

I AWOKE, much refreshed, just before the clock from the church steeple chimed six. For some time I lay quiet, groping my way back into reality. When the recollection of my last-night's disaster drifted back into my brain, I felt almost physically sick with disappointment and rage, until awakening determination came to my help. "No use repining. Is there no way to repair the damage? Hullo! it 's Sunday to-day. Sunday! A village jail can't be so awfully strong! I 'll be moved to-day, though. Will they take me away in a car? Those gendarmes are n't easily fooled! But, after all, it 's Sunday. Perhaps that 's a reason why they won't move me!" The idea took such a hold on me that I was up in a jiffy.

The cell, as I could see now, was square and very small, four paces across. The only article of furniture was the bed, which took up about one third of the floor space. There was nothing else in the room. The window was in the

wall opposite the bed, the door on the right. The former was strongly barred, as I knew already. Moreover, several ladders hung in front of it along the outside of the wall. The door seemed fairly strong and was made of rough boards. So was the ceiling. A beam extended from above the window to the opposite wall. The ceiling boards at right angles did not run through from wall to wall but terminated on top of the beam, as could be seen from their different widths on each side of it. Standing on the bed, I could place my hands flat against them without stretching my arms to the full. In one place above it, and near the left wall looking toward the window, a splinter had come away from the edge of a board. Although the wood at that point showed signs of dry-rot, I did not investigate it thoroughly just then.

It was a great find, I thought at the time, when I discovered under the bed a big piece of timber, the sawn-off end of a beam, about three feet long. To pounce upon it and hide it under the paillasse was the work of seconds. It would furnish an excellent battering-ram.

Up to now I had depended upon my ears to warn me of anybody's coming. After the discovery of the battering-ram, I made sure, by trying to get a glimpse of the next room

through cracks in the door, that nobody was watching me. A part of the fire-engine could be seen, and on it a clean cup and saucer. "Somebody must have been in that room to-day! Nobody would have placed it there last night. Besides, I did n't see anybody carrying anything. Could n't have been done while I was awake. Better go slow!"

Outside the window was a kitchen-garden with some fruit-trees. To the right, the corner of a house and a pigsty with a solitary undersized occupant terminated the view. My horizon was bounded by the roofs of a few houses which stood behind trees.

It was past seven o'clock when I heard the key turn in the outer door. Soon the door of my cell flew open, and in marched the short, sharp-featured man of the night before, with a pot of coffee, a cup and saucer, and something done up in paper, which turned out to be excellent bread and butter. Butter, mind you! With him entered a very young soldier, who nonchalantly sat down on my bed to survey me gravely. Around the opening of the door clustered the elder boys of the village, pushing and straining. Behind them were the girls, giggling and whispering nervously. All devoured me with their eyes. In the rear were the small fry.

They overflowed into the street, where the urchins, feeling perfectly safe from the bad man inside, indulged in catcalls and disparaging shouts at my expense, while I had breakfast. I chatted the while with the man whom I shall call the warder, although he probably had many functions in the village. My efforts to obtain information from him as to whether or not I was likely to be taken away that day proved unsuccessful.

When my visitors had left me, I remembered that, experienced jailbird as I had become since the beginning of the war, I had a duty to perform—a scrutiny of the walls of the cell for any records former occupants might have left there. This leaving of inscriptions seems to be "the correct thing" among German prisoners—criminals, I mean. They are not always nice but invariably interesting, particularly under the circumstances in which they are read. The walls of my abode had been recently whitewashed, and there was only one inscription: "André—[I forget the surname] evadé Avril 2me 1916, repris Avril 3me 1916." Thus a fellow-fugitive had been here only the previous day.

I very badly wanted my morning smoke, and unexpectedly I had found two cigarettes in my

pockets, but there were no matches; and I had been warned that smoking was not permitted. A woman was walking about in the garden at this time. I took her to belong to the house whose corner I could see; she was probably the wife of the owner. I intended to appeal to her compassionate spirit. After a time she was joined by an elderly woman, perhaps her mother. Although they did not show obvious interest in me, yet they kept passing in front of my window. At last I addressed them, whereupon they stopped with alacrity. The elder woman was certainly talkative. She pitched into me at once, going over the whole register of my sins as an Englishman as conceived by the German mind, and telling me what a disgusting lot of robbers, thieves, and murderers we were. As soon as she had got it off her chest, she became rather friendly. "You 'd be in Holland now, if you had n't been taken last night."

"Surely not," with a puzzled frown. "I thought I 'd have another two-days' walk from here."

"Oh, no. It 's only a four-hours' walk by the road into Holland from here."

"In this direction?" I pointed east, into Germany.

"No, over there. You go through —— and ——, then take the —— road on the right. It 's not more than four hours, is it?" turning to her daughter, who nodded.

"What 's the use of your telling me now when I am behind the bars again?" I groaned. Ingratiatingly: "Could you oblige me with a match? I am dying for a smoke."

"You are n't allowed to smoke!" severely. Then they left me.

For a time small boys kept looking in at the window. Their advent was always heralded by the sound of a scramble, from which I gathered that there must be a fence or a gate between the building I was in and the house on my right. Sometimes they were chased away incontinently by somebody I could not see. That any attempt at breaking out would have to lead through the garden was a foregone conclusion. The other side of the building was on the public street.

At about ten o'clock the warder appeared, and I managed to be let out, mainly to have a look around. When we returned, the Amtmann was waiting for me. The first thing he did was to search me for the two cigarettes. The women had split on me! Then I tried to find out whether I was to be moved that day, but could not get a satisfactory answer. This made me

rather hopeful that the cell would have to harbor me for another night. Of course, I professed myself most anxious to be sent off, which was natural. The sooner the military authorities should take me in charge, the sooner I should know my punishment and get it over. I was careful to explain all this. Finally, the Amtmann asked me whether or not I wanted any of the food he had taken from me. The answer was in the affirmative. But although he repeated this question later in the day, and promised to send me the sausage, I never got it. My request for something to read he granted by sending me some German weeklies called *Die Woche* ("The Week").

Then he left me, only to reappear at 11:30. This time he was very solemn, and asked me to give him my word of honor that I was not an English officer. Obviously one was at large in Germany; I could not suppose that it was a shot at random. With feeling I assured him that I was not an officer and never had been one. My questions regarding this interesting subject fell on deaf ears.

The Amtmann's parting words excited me greatly. He regretted that I should have to spend another night in his village, because they

could not arrange for an escort on Sunday. It was difficult to hide my exultation over this bit of news, but I believe I managed to look dejected and resigned.

Soon after the Amtmann had gone, the warder brought me my dinner in a dinner-pail. He left it with me and disappeared. The food was certainly the best I had ever received from German authorities at any time. The pot was full of excellent potatoes in brown, greasy onion gravy. A decent-sized piece of hot, home-made sausage lay on top. I was very hungry, but so excited that I was half-way through the mess before I realized that I was merely swallowing it down without tasting a bit of it. That was sheer ingratitude, and thereafter I went ahead slowly, thoroughly enjoying it. The pot was empty far too soon; a second edition would have been very acceptable. I complimented the warder on the excellent fare in his prison.

"I told my wife about you," he acknowledged, "and she said we ought to give you a decent dinner anyway."

When I had finished I thought the time favorable to begin operations. After a substantial Sunday dinner—there was evidently no shortage of food in that part of Germany as

yet—the village was bound to be more or less somnolent. Indeed, no sound was to be heard from the street.

The first thing was to make a thorough inspection of the ceiling. If one could get into the loft the roof would offer little resistance, it being, as I had seen, tiled in the ordinary way.

Where the splinter had broken off, two boards appeared affected by dry-rot, a narrow one and a wider one next to it. Tentatively I pushed against the narrow one near the end which was nailed to the beam. There was some spring there, not the firm resistance of a sound board well nailed home. Under the slowly increased pressure it suddenly gave with a creak, and a shower of splinters and dust came down upon me and the bed. I could now look into the loft and see the under side of the tiles. Directly in line with my eyes was a hole where a tile had lost its upper half. This would be the place to attack, once through the ceiling.

In the meantime the sun shone through another hole which I could not see, and, through the crack upon my bed. To pull the board back into its original position had no effect. Where there had been a narrow crack in the morning another splinter had become detached, and there was the scintillating beam of light cleaving a

path through the dust motes, a traitorous tell-tale. After a moment's thought, I rolled my oilsilks into a long sausage and shoved it past the raised board into the loft in such a fashion that it would roll over the crack when the board was lowered. It worked, and after a critical inspection I decided that none but an exceptionally observant individual would ever notice that the ceiling had been tampered with.

All this had not taken very long. Absolute silence brooded over the place. Fearing that the narrow board might be insufficient to let me into the loft, I tried to get the wider one next to it loose. When it resisted the pressure of my hands, the battering-ram was brought into play, with the overcoat wrapped round the end of it to deaden the noise. Using it with discretion, I could make no impression. So I left it at that.

Having removed all traces of my work from the bed and the floor, I stood near the door and kicked my heels against it. This I did to have some explanation, should anybody have heard the battering-ram at work. Then I quieted down, resolving not to do any more until soon after the next visit.

I was now quite convinced that I should get out of the prison during the night. My one anxiety was for the weather to keep fine. I had

a fair idea of how to proceed as long as I could keep my direction. Without a compass I was dependent upon the stars. There was no sign of a change in the sky; nevertheless, I kept an unceasing and apprehensive watch upon what I could see of it.

At three o'clock the Amtmann came back: "The people next door complain that you disturbed them in the night. There were thumping and bumping noises coming from this cell." I had slept almost like a log through the night. The involuntary expression of astonishment on my face at this compaint was a more convincing answer than I could have made verbally to the Amtmann, who was watching me narrowly all the time. I protested, of course, and then volunteered the information that I had been kicking my heels against the door a short time ago, apologizing with a contrite mien.

"Oh, these people always seem to imagine things!" was his reply, wherewith he left me. I thought I had got well out of it. Obviously there was a misunderstanding, and the noise which had attracted the attention of "the people next door" was that of my efforts an hour or so ago.

At four o'clock the warder brought me coffee and bread and butter. He had a small retinue

with him. When I had finished, I asked him to fill the coffee-pot with water and leave it with me. Not only was I very thirsty; I wanted to absorb as much moisture as I could while I had the chance.

As soon as he had gone I got on the bed again. The sun had now traveled far enough to the west to make the roll of oilsilks superfluous.

If, as I believed, the cell wall was an outer one, the board could now be fast only at the end above it. Applying my strength at the other end near the beam ought to give me a tremendous leverage, which should force it loose with little effort. It resisted, however, until I fancied I could hear my joints crack with the exertion. The strain lasted a few seconds; then the board came away above the wall with a rending crash. Simultaneously something heavy fell to the ground on the other side. The sound of it striking the floor, and the slant of the board, revealed the existence of a third room in the building, across which it had extended to the real outer wall of the prison, and at the same time explained its strong resistance to my efforts.

With thumping heart and bated breath I listened for any suspicious sounds from beyond the wall or from the street, but nothing happened.

Still the board, which now ought to have moved easily, resisted. Getting my head into the loft, I found it littered with heavy lumps of metal and plenty of broken glass, the remnants of old street-lamp standards. Some of the metal things projected over the opening; as soon as I had pushed them away the board moved up and down freely.

This was all I dared do at the moment in preparation for the escape. The rest could easily be accomplished by the sense of touch in the night. For the present, the board had to be fitted back into place. I accomplished that, or nearly so, and trusted to the blindness of the average mortal for my safety.

When I had removed the dust and splinters from my bed, and everything looked in order, I saw the woman from next door walking in the garden. I was quite taken aback, and watched her for some time, but she seemed unconcerned enough. She could hardly have seen me except by putting her face close to the window, for the eaves projected a considerable distance beyond the walls, and were not more than eight feet from the ground. Consequently it was never light in the cell, and less so now when the sun was nearing the sky-line.

About half an hour afterward she came to my window, bringing two girls with her, who obviously had come on purpose to see the wild Englishman. The taller was a strapping, Junoesque maiden with apple-red cheeks and considerable assurance. Her friend, a foil to her, was more of a Cinderella, gray, middle-sized, reticent, but pleasant to look upon, and with intelligent eyes and a humorous mouth. She said never a word during her friend's lively chat with me, only gurgling her amusement now and then.

When they had gone I continued my intermittent watch of "the little patch of blue that prisoners call the sky." Gradually it changed to a rosy hue, then the color faded, and a few stars began to twinkle feebly.

With the approach of evening the temperature had gone down, and the overcoat had become a comfort. To my surprise, an inner pocket, crackling ever so little, gave up a piece of map not larger than my hand. It was from the more useless map I had bought, but the most important part of it, the only piece I had kept when setting out from Haltern. Being printed on thin, unbacked paper, it had escaped the attention of my captors the more easily as

they had found the other complete map in my coat pocket. It did not tell me much more than I knew already, but, kept before me until darkness fell, it undoubtedly helped me visualize the country I was walking through later on.

CHAPTER IX

BREAKING PRISON

BEFORE I made a move I was going to wait until the probability of a surprise visit should have passed. Such a visit I expected at about eleven o'clock, for at that time the Amtmann would probably go home from wherever he was drinking beer, and on his way would have a look at me. To give my jailers an extra hour to surprise me in, was again only ordinary precaution.

Once in the loft, I was going to take off as many tiles as I must to get through the roof into the garden, from there into the street, and out of the village in any direction. In the country it would most likely prove necessary to work round the village at a safe distance in order to strike a certain turnpike. Several miles along it a brook crossing the road was an indication that I should have to look out for a third-class cart track. Some distance along this a railway, and, shortly after, a first-class

road, could be taken as evidence that the frontier was within four miles, and that I had entered the danger zone.

When it was too dark to continue the study of the scrap of map, I lay down, but was too excited to go to sleep. Slowly the hours and quarter-hours, chimed by the church, dragged past. As I expected, just after eleven o'clock the Amtmann entered with the warder. "Why! are n't you asleep yet?" he asked. I protested that the rattle of the key had awakened me. They left. Half an hour after the warder came in again, said something, and disappeared. At 12:15 I burst into action.

Feeling for the sweater and oilsilks, which lay ready to hand, I rolled them into a bundle. I did the same with my jacket, waistcoat, and underclothes, after having stripped to the waist, the better to get through the narrow opening in the ceiling. Next, I folded the paillasse and propped it against the wall at the foot of the bed. Standing on it, I lifted the loose board and with a jerk of my wrists flung it free. I shoved the two bundles of clothes up, first feeling for an unencumbered space of floor, then levered myself after them.

Arms extended, and with a careful shuffle of my feet, lest I should step on some glass or

metal object, I gained the spot where one or two stars glimmered through the hole in the roof.

Grasping the remaining half of the broken tile, I twisted it out as carefully as I could, not without causing a grating noise, which sounded loud in the absolute silence. After some difficulty I drew it through the enlarged hole and, again making sure that the floor was clear, deposited it carefully. The next tile gave greater trouble. It being entire, the ends of the superimposed ones had to be lifted to allow of its withdrawal. When I straightened up, in order to attack the third in the row, I was startled by the sound of a low-voiced conversation close to me and apparently on the same level.

The natural impulse was to keep quiet, which I did. I waited. The even voices went on. Carefully I pushed my head outside and looked about. In the gable of the house on the right, and only about ten yards away, was a small window. The sound of murmured speech floated through the open panes directly toward me from the dark room behind. I took it to be the bedroom of the farmer and his wife, and remembering their complaint about my having been noisy the night before, I cursed the ill chance which had made this one German farmer

—one, surely, in ten thousand—fond of fresh air in his sleeping-chamber.

The bitterly cold night air was streaming over my naked shoulders while I stood waiting for the people to go to sleep. Soon the talk ceased, but I gave them a liberal amount of time before I continued my labors.

When I had taken out three tiles in the first row, those in the next and the next again were quickly removed. The opening was now sufficiently large, but the two exposed laths running through it did not leave too much space between them for a man of my size to clamber through.

Stepping back to get my clothes, I misjudged the distance, which was small—a step or two only—and almost fell through the hole in the floor. I saved myself only by quickly shifting my weight from one foot to the other, which touched something soft. With a thud one of my bundles fell back into the cell. Fortunately it was the oilsilks and sweater; unfortunately the piece of map was in the pocket of the former. I did not go after them, but left them where they had fallen, and slipped into my clothes as quickly as the want of light and space would permit. This done, it was only a matter of great care and unusual contortions to get my somewhat bulky person through the laths.

At last I stood on the lower of the two I had exposed, with the night wind soughing over me. Doubtfully, I surveyed the expanse of roof at my feet. How to get across it was the question. Sliding over the tiles meant making a tremendous noise, quite apart from the danger of possible injury. If they were removed one by one, what was to be done with them? Should I chuck them into the garden as they came off the laths? I had it! Why not repair the roof above me as I demolished it in my descent?

My sense of humor was rather tickled at the idea. To imagine the faces of the Amtmann and the warder when they were trying to reconstruct "the crime" was exceedingly funny. It made me use some extra and unnecessary care as I replaced the tiles on the laths above me, taking them, always two and two, from those below.

In a very short time I was standing on the last lath. I was in the denser shadow of the roof now, and the eight feet from the ground might have been eight thousand for all I could see of it. This made me hesitate, since a miscalculation of the distance might easily have meant a jar or a sprain. Without a sound, however, I landed on a soft garden bed.

A few moments after I was at the gate, and

over, and in the street. A solitary street lamp was burning here and there; not a soul was in sight. In the shadow of the wall I stooped to take off my boots and socks. As far as I recollect, I got out of the village like a streak of greased lightning. In reality I probably walked with due caution. I did not stop until I found myself in a dark lane outside, where I put on my boots. It was now 1:15.

The news of my escape would spread, I was sure, like wildfire through the country, and a hue and cry would soon be raised. Every man Jack who could spare the time would make one of a searching party. For such a thing to happen in a small community was bound to create a far greater stir than among the more sophisticated inhabitants of even a middle-sized town. I had received a hint that police dogs were kept in Vehlen. This might have been bluff, but it was not safe to bet on it. To put as much distance between me and the pursuers was my only chance.

To do that I had to find the turnpike I have spoken of. As far as I knew, it entered Vehlen from the west. South of and parallel to it was a secondary railway track.

As soon as a sufficient expanse of sky was visible for me to take bearings, which was impos-

sible in the lane on account of big trees on each side, I found that I should have to pass around the southern side of Vehlen to get to the desired point. This would prove difficult and wasteful of my most precious commodity, time, as an extensive copse and generally unfavorable country intervened. The seemingly bolder course of walking back through the village had decided advantages and was at this hour hardly dangerous. Off came my boots again, and at a dog-trot, which increased to a fast sprint in front of a public house with a drunken voice issuing through the window, I crossed the southern part of the village. I did not happen to come upon the turnpike as I had hoped. On taking bearings after this second traverse of the village I found it lying northeast of me and therefore concluded that both railway and road were to be looked for in a northerly direction.

"Northwest now, and damn the wire fences." It was difficult going at first, the country, criss-crossed by fences and ditches, enclosing swampy meadows. Due north was easier walking and would do nearly as well. A path gave me a rest. It was so heavenly easy to follow. Bang! I stumbled over a rail. "Hurrah, the railway! Now for the road!"

Again across-country, I pushed on as fast

as I could in my favored direction. It was not very fast, for the difficulties were enough to drive one crazy. Swampy meadows, ditches, barbed-wire fences, woods, copses, but never a bit of easy ground. Soon I was wet to the hips. Branches plucked at my garments or slashed me across the face; barbed-wire fences grasped and retained pieces of cloth as I got over them; the sides of ditches caved in under my feet and, having jumped short in consequence, I landed half in the water; and ever and anon the village church tolled another quarter of an hour.

It was an absolute nightmare. Panting and breathless, I got up after one of my many tumbles. It was in an open kind of wood. My soaked clothes were dripping, yet I felt warm with the speed of my flight. Then the sensation of being utterly lost came over me, the danger-signal that the nerves are giving way. Luckily I had sense enough to recognize it as such, and promptly sat down in half an inch of water, pretending that I was in no hurry whatever.

I tried to reason out the situation. If the road were where I sought it, I should have come to it long before. My maps were unreliable in small details. Suppose the road crossed to the south of the railway, some distance outside Vehlen, instead of in the village as marked. In

that case I had started from a point north of the road and south of the railway. Better go back to the railway and follow it west until I came to the point of intersection.

I turned due south, feeling better for the rest, and ten minutes later jumped the ditch along the turnpike. The night was very fine, the road hard and smooth. My footsteps rang so loudly that it was difficult to tell whether anybody was coming up behind me or not. For the third time I took off my boots and socks, and walked the rest of the night with bare feet. It was simply glorious to be able to step out. The exercise soon sent the blood tingling and warming through my body, which had become chilled during my rest in the woods. My clothes were drying apace; I hardly knew now that they were wet. My toes seemed to grip the ground and lever me forward. It was good to be alive.

After I had traversed the considerable belt of isolated farms surrounding a village, the country became quite uninhabited for a time, until a solitary inn appeared on my right. Here another road joined from the north, and at the point of meeting stood a big iron sign-post. "Dangerous corner ahead! Motors to slow down," I managed to decipher, clinging to the pointing arm. Soon after, the brook was

crossed on a stone bridge. Not being thirsty, I did not stop, but went forward until I came to a track on my right. Posts were planted across it at measured intervals, as if it had been closed to wheeled traffic some time before, yet there were fresh cart ruts running parallel to it. The country was flat, with plenty of cover, and empty. I kept checking the direction of the path, which meandered about a little, and found it one or two points more westerly than I had expected. This worried me a little. Its angle with the road shown on the map was so small, however, that I could not attach undue importance to it. At the worst, it meant striking the frontier ultimately a mile or two farther south, increasing the distance by that much from the point the soldier had so triumphantly warned me against the night before.

In due course I came across another railroad and a turnpike. A quarter of a mile to the north a church steeple was faintly outlined against the sky, indicating a village. This tallied fairly well with my expectations. When crossing over the line of rails I had entered the danger zone, where sentries and patrols might be expected anywhere. Probably the frontier was no more than three miles ahead, and might be nearer.

Instead of proceeding along the road, I walked at about two hundred yards to one side over plowed fields. It hurt my feet until I thrust them hastily into my boots without troubling about the socks.

The sky was paling faintly in the east. It was high time to disappear into some thicket, like the hunted animal I was.

Behind a windmill and a house on my right the outline of dark woods promised cover. There was no possibility now of picking and choosing; I had to take what I could find. What there was of it was the reverse of satisfactory. Most of the ground was swampy. The trees and bushes, which seemed to offer excellent places for concealment while it was dark, moved apart with the growing light, while I grew more anxious.

At last I found a wood composed of small birches and pines, and some really magnificent trees. Several paths ran through it. Fairly in the center they left a sort of island, a little more densely studded with trees than the rest, and with plenty of long heather between them. This must have been about five o'clock.

The heather was sopping wet with dew, and I did not care to lie down in it just then. Instead, although it was already fairly light, I

scouted around, trusting for safety to the early hour and my woodcraft.

At the northern end of the woods I found signs of recent clearing work, warning me to keep away from there. Farther on, a dense patch of saplings would have made an excellent lair, had it not been for the ground, which was almost a quagmire. On its farther side a cart road would give me a start on the following night. I did not lie down in the wet heather when I had returned to my lair, but pressed myself into a small fir-tree. I was tired, and soon very cold. Yet I had rather a good time. I was a little proud of myself, and picturing the faces of my late captors in Vehlen when they found the bird flown, which would happen about this time, was the best of fun. I chuckled to myself about the joke whenever my head, falling forward, awoke me from a semi-stupor.

The sun took some time to clear the morning mist from the face of the country. After that, it grew warmer quickly. It must have been a rare morning, but I was past appreciating it. Ere yet the heather was near being dry, I let myself fall forward into a nice, springy tuft which my dim vision had been gloating over for some time. I believe I was asleep before I reached the ground.

My sleep was so profound that I had no sense of the lapse of time when I awoke. As far as the temperature went, it might have been a day in the latter part of May, instead of the 5th of April. From the altitude of the sun it appeared to be between ten and eleven o'clock. Children and chickens kept up their usual concert not far away. The sound of axes came from the clearing close by. I felt quite warm and comfortable, particularly after I had taken off my boots and placed them and my socks in the sun to dry. Neither hunger nor thirst assailed me during the day, although the afternoon coffee and bread and butter of the previous day had been the last food to pass my lips. Sleep stole over me softly now and again, so softly, indeed, that wakefulness merged into slumber and slumber into wakefulness without sensation. Awake, I was as alert as ever; asleep, utterly unconscious. I am quite unable to say when or how often this happened, so swiftly did the one change into the other.

Nevertheless, the day appeared intolerably long. When the sun was still some distance above the horizon, I became so restless that I had to move about in the confined space I permitted myself. The breaking and trimming—with fingers, nails, and teeth—of a stout sapling

into a heavy staff, jumping-pole and, perhaps, weapon, occupied part of the time. Then the fidgeting started again. I was eager to do something. The decision was so near. It had to come that night. The weather, still fine, was breaking. I felt it in my bones. Without the stars nothing could be done; without food, and particularly without water, and with only the clothes I stood up in, I should not last through a period of wet weather.

I did not feel apprehensive. On the contrary, I had a splendid confidence that all would go well. The Dutch border could not well be more than three miles away. I had to proceed across-country, of course, away from roads, certainly never on them, to pass successfully the sentries and patrols, who very likely would concentrate the greater part of their attention upon them. However, it would not do to depend on being safe anywhere. As a good deal of my time would have to be devoted to avoiding them, I might find it difficult to keep an accurate course, even if other circumstances did not force me to alter it considerably. All this had to be considered and certain safeguards planned. For those of my readers who are interested in the technique of my endeavors I would add that I expected to find a railroad track which ran

parallel to my proposed course on my left, presumably a mile or two off, and a road entering Holland about three miles to the north of me, which in an extreme case would prevent my going hopelessly astray.

At last the sun touched the sky-line. Before it was quite dark, but after the voices of children and fowls and the sounds of work in the woods had ceased, my restlessness forced me to do something. I sneaked along the paths and into the thicket of saplings I had discovered in the morning, there to ensconce myself close to the road. Once a girl and a soldier in animated conversation passed me, while ever so gradually twilight deepened into darkness.

When the night was as black as could be hoped for, I walked a hundred yards or so along the road, bent double and with every sense alert. Then a path on my right led me through tall woods. Coming into the open, I corrected my course, and not long after I was stopped by a deep ditch, almost a canal. Its banks showed white and sandy in the starlight; on the side nearest me was a line of narrow rails. Some tip-over trucks were standing on them, and a few lay upturned on the ground. I remember bending down, in order to feel whether or not the rails were smooth on top, a sign of recent

use, but straightened immediately. Since I should be either in Holland, or a prisoner, or dead before the morning, these precautions seemed superfluous.

The ditch threw me out of my course. Walking along it, I noticed a triangular sheen of light in the sky bearing northwest. It looked as if it were the reflex of a well-illuminated place miles ahead. I took it to be the first station in Holland on the railway from Bocholt. Later I was able to verify this.

When I got to the end of the ditch, I struck out across the flat country toward the light. It took me some time to extricate myself from a swamp. In trying to work around it, with an idea of edging in toward a railway line which I knew to be entering Holland somewhere on my left, I suddenly came upon a road running northwest. I left it quicker than I had got on it, walking parallel to it over plowed land and keeping it in sight. Shortly after, I passed between two houses, to see another road in front of me running at right angles to the former.

I crouched in the angle between the two roads, trying to penetrate the darkness, and listening with all my might. I could see no living thing, and all was silent. Just across from me a structure, the nature of which I could not make out,

held my gaze. I waited, then jumped across the road into its shadow. It now resolved itself into an open shed, with a wagon underneath. Again I listened and looked, with my back toward Holland, watching the two houses I had passed, and nervously scanning the road.

Far down it a small dog began to bark. Not taking any notice of it at first, I was in the act of starting across a field covered knee-high with some stiff growth, when it occurred to me that the barking sounded like an alarm, of which I could not be the cause.

Gaining the shelter of the shed again, and straining my ears, I became aware of distant and approaching footsteps, regular and ominous. I ducked into the ditch, crawling half under the floor of the shed, and waited. When the sound was only about a yard from me, the helmet, the head, the up-slanting rifle muzzle, and the shoulders of a patrol became outlined against the sky. He walked on and was swallowed up by the darkness. His footsteps grew fainter, died away.

"Splendid!" I thought. "This road must be close to the border. It runs parallel to it. Maybe I am through the sentry lines." I pushed on, very much excited, yet going as carefully as I could. A barbed wire and ditch were

negotiated. A patch of open woodland engulfed me. Going was bad on account of holes in the ground; my instinct was for rushing it, and difficult to curb.

Three shallow ditches side by side! I felt them with my hand to make sure they were not merely deeply trodden paths. "This must be the frontier!"

I was shaking with excitement and exultation when I started forward again. My leg went into a hole, and I fell forward across a dry piece of wood, which exploded underneath me with a noise like a pistol shot. I scrambled to my feet, listened, and walked on.

CHAPTER X

CAUGHT AGAIN!

"HALT!" The command came like a thunderclap and shook me from head to foot. Yet I did not believe that it could mean anything but a Dutch sentry. I stopped and tried to locate the man, who, from the sound of his voice, must be very close. I could not see him.

"Come here, and hold up your hands!"

I did so and stepped forward.

"Here, here!" The voice was almost at my elbow. Then I saw the white patch of a face above a bush. He came up to me, putting his pistol muzzle in my stomach.

"Who are you?"

I was a bit dizzy and shaken, but not quite done yet.

"Who are *you?*" I asked.

"I 'm a frontier guard."

"Dutch or German?" I could not see his uniform.

"German!"

I groaned aloud; then: "What the —— are you stopping me for? What are you doing here, anyway? Leave me alone; I 'm on Dutch soil."

For answer he stepped back, saw the cudgel in my upraised hand, and said sharply, "Drop that stick." I obeyed. He whistled, and got an answer from close by, followed by the breaking of branches and footsteps, as somebody else moved toward us. My captor put his automatic into his pocket, keeping his hand on it.

"Who are you?" he demanded again.

"That has nothing whatever to do with you. I crossed the frontier about fifty yards down there. Good night!"

"Stop! You 're over an hour from the frontier yet."

For a moment I wondered whether I could get my weight into a blow on his jaw and make a break for it; but, as I swung slightly forward, lowering my left a little at the same time, I reflected that I could not possibly tell whether he was in reach; it was too dark. Now I believed that I was still far from the frontier. Even if I could down him, there was the second man close by. And if a bullet did not bring me down, they could easily catch me in a race, knowing the country as I did not, or bring any

number of soldiers about my ears. If I were caught after having struck him, it would merely mean a blank wall and a firing party. Not good enough!

All this passed quickly through my mind, the ideas being only half formed. In the long days of solitary confinement, by which I expiated my offense, I sat in judgment upon myself again and again, every time condemning myself for a slacker. But I knew much more about the actual position later than at the moment of capture, and when one is brooding in cells, ready to barter half one's remaining life for a glimpse of the open, it is difficult to come to a just judgment. To-day I cannot see that I could have done anything but give in. Had I had money on me I should have tried offering a bribe, but I had not even a farthing piece in my pocket. The "noes" had it.

My two captors took me between them and marched me off for some time along wood-paths. The reaction had set in now, and my senses were dulled. I kept stumbling and falling until they took my arms, when we made better progress.

"Did I come straight toward you or what?" I asked dully, after a time.

"No. We were close to the place we got you at. I heard something, and walked toward the

sound. Then I saw you," was the reply of the first man.

After an indefinite time, we struck the railway and turned down it toward Germany. We walked and walked. I was beginning to collect my thoughts, and with them my suspicions of foul play were returning, when we were challenged.

A sentry flashed his torch over us. In its light I perceived for the first time that my captors were in civilian clothes, without badge or any sign of officialdom. This, and the fact that we had picked up the sentry only after walking some time in the direction toward Germany, increased my perplexity.

I had been dully aware of a strong light in front of us. It was from the headlights of a train standing in a small station. In front of it we passed over a level crossing, and approached an inn opposite.

They took me into a bar-room. At a table on one side of the bar sat a soldier in the uniform of what the Germans call "a sergeant-major-lieutenant," a Catholic priest, and a civilian, who turned out to be mine host. The sentry reported to the soldier while the old priest made me sit down at their table. The officer did not seem to like this arrangement at first, but the

padre took no notice of him. He asked me in English whether I was hungry and thirsty. I pleaded guilty to both counts, and the nice old man forthwith ordered beer and sandwiches for me, telling me the while in bad English that he had been to the Jesuit College in Rome, where he had picked up his knowledge of the language from Irishmen.

In the meantime my captors were regaling themselves at the bar. Turning to them, the padre suddenly asked, "Where did you get him?" "Near ——," was the answer from the first man. "But—but—but that 's *very* near the frontier," stammered the priest, with a look of astonishment on his face. "No, no," chorused the assembled company, as if acting on instructions, "that 's still an hour from the frontier," using exactly the words my captors had used in the woods. I stopped eating for a time. I felt physically sick. Only to imagine that I had won through, actually got over the frontier, as I began firmly to believe now, to be tricked back!

The food and the beer had given me fresh strength. When I was told that it was time to go, I felt more or less indifferent. We passed along a road, the two civilians in front, the soldier behind, and I in the middle, occupied with

my own thoughts and only answering with a grim cheerfulness such questions as were addressed to me.

Here I made my second grave mistake, counting the attempt at passing through Vehlen as the first. Had I kept alert for "something to turn up," I could not have failed to see that we were marching along the road which I had crossed some time before, and passing the same shed. Had I noticed it then, instead of the next morning, I should have known where the guard-room was in which I spent the night. Instead of that—but that is anticipating events.

Presently we arrived at the guard-house, an ordinary farmhouse the ground floor of which had been cleared for the sterner duties of war.

Above the table of the N. C. O.[1] in charge a large scale map hung against the wall. I was not permitted to go near it, but its scale, being perhaps three or four inches to the mile, allowed me to see pretty much all there was to be seen from the other side of the room, where I had to spend the night on a chair. I recognized the road I had crossed (the ditch was marked on it); and, where the three narrow ditches ought to have been, there began the blank space with the name "Holland" written across it.

[1] N. C. O.: non-commissioned officer.

I could not see the guard-house marked, probably because I did not know where to look for it. Consequently I had not the faintest idea of what to do provided I could get away. This uncertainty made me miss a chance. Of course I was never alone in the room, but once during the night the N. C. O. took me out. He had no rifle with him; I doubt whether he had a pistol. Naturally he kept close to me; yet, had I only known where to turn, a break might have been possible, without entailing unreasonable risks.

At last the morning came, and with it the usual stir and bustle. One of the soldiers cursed me up and down for an Englishman. I concluded he had never been to the front. We prisoners had the same experience over and over again: the fellows with the home billets were the brutes and bullies. I was right, for my antagonist was stopped short in his peroration by a small man with a high treble voice, the result of a brain wound.

"Shut up, you! You make me tired. You 've never seen the enemy. If any cursing of Englanders is to be done, I 'll do it. I had three English bullets in my body. T 'other side 's doing their duty same as we."

"Yes," broke in another, "I 've fought

against the English. As long as we say nothing, keep your mouth shut. I 'll tell you as soon as your views are wanted, Mr. Stay-at-home."

These two latter shared their breakfast with me, otherwise I should have had nothing. The second one took me outside: "Sorry, old man, hard luck! Sure you were n't in Holland when these —— [a nasty name] dropped on you?"

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Only this—strictly between you and me and the doorpost, mind!—my friend and I would have liked you to get home. We can imagine what it means—'prisoner of war.' Make no mistake, we 'd have stopped you, if you 'd come across us. If only you 'd been caught by soldiers instead of these —— agents! Don't let anybody hear it, but from what I heard you were in Holland all right."

At about ten o'clock I was taken to the inn to be examined by the "sergeant-major-lieutenant." On the way we passed, and I recognized, the shed.

"How far is it from here to the frontier?" I asked my escort.

He did not answer.

"Look here, I can't get away from you, can I, with no cover within two hundred yards and you having five in the magazine and one in the

barrel? Can't you understand that I want to know?"

He eyed me doubtfully.

"You can spit across the frontier from here," he made slow answer.

That, I knew, was meant metaphorically, but it sufficed for me.

The examination did not amount to much. I was considered with grave suspicion by the sergeant-major, because at that time I could not tell him the name of the village I had escaped from. Also, the British officer was haunting their minds still. If he and I were not identical, I might have met and helped him, was their beautifully logical argument. "See that he is taken to Bocholt on the two-thirty train and handed over to a man from Company Headquarters. Now take him back to the guard-room."

When we got back there, they put a sentry in the yard, who sat on a chair with a rifle across his lap, and went to sleep. It must have been a strictly unofficial sentry. Nobody took the slightest notice of him, and he was quite superfluous, because most of the soldiers off duty were in the yard all the time enjoying the warm sunshine. Dinner-hour came and went. I, of course, received nothing officially, but the man

who had talked with me in the morning gave me several of his sandwiches.

After dinner I was alone in the guard-room with a fresh N. C. O. in charge, who was writing up some reports. The window in the next room where the men slept at night, and which was now deserted, was not latched. I wondered whether I could get it open and make a dash for it down the road into the next cover. I had been fidgeting about, and when I changed to a steady tramp into the kitchen, through the guard-room, and then several steps into the dormitory, it attracted no attention. I doubt whether the N. C. O., intent on his task, was aware of me at all. The window was hinged, as all windows are in Germany. Twice I visited it and got it ajar. The third time I pulled it open, and had placed my hands on the sill to get out, when a patrol came into view. He saw me at the same time. The movement of his rifle could not be misunderstood. I closed the window and stepped back. The patrol came into the room and gave me some good advice: "Don't be a fool! We 'll get you sure. Can't afford not to. What do you think would happen to us, if you escaped? Last night, a Frenchman would n't stand on challenge. He 's dead now. This is in the day-

time." He never reported me, though; or, if he did, I never heard of it.

I talked with the soldiers now and then. It appeared that fugitives were caught virtually every night. They would not admit that many got over. About one in ten was killed, so they said; but I think that is exaggerated.

They laughed when I told them of the punishment I was expecting. "You to be punished, a civilian?—nonsense! You have a right to try for it, if you care to take the risk. Why, military prisoners of war get only a fortnight cell in camp for escaping. We 've had a Frenchman here three times in eight weeks."

Two soldiers took me to the train and to Bocholt. There I was handed over to another N. C. O., and after a tedious journey on a steam tram we arrived at Company Headquarters in Vreden, where I was again examined, this time very thoroughly and with great cleverness.

That evening I was lodged in prison. Also, the weather broke, and it was to the music of dripping eaves and gurgling spouts that I fell asleep.

CHAPTER XI

UNDER ESCORT

ON the fourth morning, when it seemed to me I had spent about a year in Vreden prison, the warder informed me that my escort had arrived. I had plenty of time to get over the excitement produced by this piece of news, for I was not called for until four o'clock, which caused me to miss my evening bowl of skilly, a dire calamity.

The soldier was waiting in the gateway. Walking down the passage toward him, I had to pass by a big burly N. C. O. of the German Army, who had a tremendous sword attached to him. I felt that something was going to happen when I approached him. As I was squeezing past him in the narrow corrider, he suddenly shot out a large hand, with which he grasped mine, limp with surprise. Giving it a hearty shake, he wished me a pleasant *Auf Wiedersehen!* (Au revoir!) I was almost past utterance with astonishment, and could only repeat his words stammeringly. "Not on your life, if

I can help it," I murmured when I had turned away and was recovering from the shock. Still, I suppose it was kindly meant.

My escort, a single soldier, went through the usual formalities of loading his rifle before my eyes and warning me to behave myself. The cord for special marksmanship dangled from his shoulder.

He was strictly noncommittal at first, and only assured me again, apropos of nothing, during our walk to the station, that he did not intend to have me escape from him. Afterward he thawed considerably, but always remained serious and subdued, talking a good deal about his wife and children, what a hard time they had of it, and that he had not seen them for eighteen months.

The preliminary jolt of the small engine of the narrow-gage train gave me the sinking sensation usually caused by the downward start of a fast lift, and for a time my heart seemed to be getting heavier with every revolution of the wheels, which put a greater distance between me and the frontier. Had I cherished hopes in spite of all? I don't know.

With several changes the journey to Berlin lasted through the night. I was very hungry, and the soldier shared with me what little food

he had. Two incidents are worth mentioning.

At the time of my escape a political tension between Holland and Germany had caused rumors of a threatened break between the two countries. The soldier who arrested me in Vehlen had alluded to it. My escort and I were alone in a third-class compartment of the east-express, about midnight, when a very dapper N. C. O. entered. He took in the situation at a glance.

"Prisoner's escort?"

"Yes."

"What is he?"

"An Englander."

"Trying to escape to Holland?"

"Yes."

"Well, I only hope the trouble with Holland will come to a head. We 'll soon show those damned Dutchmen what German discipline means. We 'll sweep the country from end to end in a week. Did he get far?"

"Close to the frontier."

"However did he manage that in that get-up?" and he sniffed disgustedly.

The other incident was interesting in case of future attempts to escape. About an hour before the train entered Berlin, detectives passed along the corridors asking for passports. I

began to wonder how I had managed to get as far as I had.

We arrived in Berlin about 9 A.M. Before we proceeded to the prison, the soldier compassionately bought me a cup of coffee and a roll at the station buffet. I had had nothing to eat since 11:30 A.M. the previous day, except a roll the soldier had given me about midnight.

This was at Alexander Platz Station, fairly in the center of Berlin. As we left the station, Alexander Platz was in front of us with the façade of the Polizei Präsidium on our right. Turning in this direction, we entered a quiet street along the right side of which the arches of the railway accommodated a few small shops and storage places underneath them. On the other side a wing of the Polizei Präsidium continued for a hundred yards or so. The next building was plain, official-looking but of no very terrible aspect, for the four rows of large windows above the ground floor were not barred on the outside. In its center a large gateway was closed by a heavy wooden double door. "Here we are," said my escort, as he pressed the button of the electric bell.

One half of the door was opened by an N. C. O. of the army. Inside the gateway on the left a corridor ran along the front of the building,

terminating at a door bearing the inscription "Office," on an enameled shield. A motion of the hand from the N. C. O. directed us toward it. We entered. Another N. C. O. was sitting at a table, writing. My soldier saluted, reported, then shook hands with me and departed.

"Your name, date of birth, place of birth, and nationality?" said the N. C. O. at the table, not unkindly.

I looked at the plain office furniture of the irregular room before answering, feeling very downhearted. Having given him the information he wanted, I asked apprehensively: "What are you going to do with me?"

"We 'll put you in solitary confinement."

"For how long?"

"Could n't tell you."

"And what then?"

"You 're going to stay with us so long that you need n't bother yet about the 'what then.' "

"But are n't you going to send me back to Ruhleben when I 'm through with my punishment for escaping?"

"I 've nothing to do with it and don't know. But I 'm pretty sure you 'll have to stay here till the end of the war."

"That 's hard punishment for an attempt to get home!"

"Bless my soul, you 're not going to be locked up all the time! There are a number of Englanders here. Most of them are up and down these stairs the whole day." With this he went out and shouted for some one. Another N. C. O. appeared. "Take this man to Block Twenty-three and lock him up. Here 's his slip." The slip, I saw later, was a piece of paper stating my name and nationality, and marked with a cross which stood for "solitary confinement." It was to be fastened to the outside of my cell door.

CHAPTER XII

THE STADTVOGTEI AND "SOLITARY"

IN its original meaning *Stadtvogtei* denotes the official residence of the *Stadtvogt*. This was an official appointed in feudal times by the overlord of the territory, as keeper of one of his castles, around which an early settlement of farmers and a few artisans had grown into a medieval town or *Stadt*.

Later on, as a fit successor of the old Stadtvogtei, a prison arose in its place, which was modernized from time to time, until in 1916 a new modern building stood where once victims had vanished into dungeons, and, later, political prisoners (among them Bebel, in 1870) had languished in dark, musty, insanitary cells.

Bricks, iron, concrete, and glass had been used in the construction of this building, the scanty furniture and the cell doors being the only wood to be found in it.

I never came to know the whole of the Stadtvogtei, but learned gradually that it enclosed a number of courtyards. These were triangular

in shape and just sixty paces in circumference. Around them the walls rose five stories high, and made deep wells of them rather than yards. The regularly spaced windows, tier upon tier, with their iron bars increased the dreariness of their aspect.

With a yard as a center, each part of the prison surrounding it formed a structural entity, a "block," separated from the next one by a space about eight feet wide, and extending from the ground floor right up to the glass roof above. The aggregation of blocks was enclosed by the outer walls as the segments of an orange are enclosed by the peel. With the cell windows toward the yards, the doors were in the circumference of the blocks. In front of them, frail-looking balconies, or gangways, extending around the blocks, took the place of corridors, and overhung by half its width the space separating the component parts of the prison. Their floors consisted in most places of thick plates of glass, fitting into the angle-irons of the cantilevers. Iron staircases and short bridges permitted communication between the different floors and blocks.

Imagine yourself standing at the end of one of these corridors and looking down its vista. In the wall nearest to you the perspectively di-

minishing quadrilaterals of eighteen evenly spaced doors, each with its ponderous lock, bolt, and a spy-hole in the center, with a row of ventilating holes above them, and, underfoot and above, the glass of two balcony floors. On the opposite side a breast-high iron railing, beyond it four feet of nothingness, and then the blank stretch of a whitewashed wall, reflecting the light from the skylights on top of the building.

Try to think of yourself as so situated that a chance of "enjoying" this view mornings and evenings, when the cell doors are unlocked for a few minutes, is eagerly anticipated as a change from the monotony of the cell, and you will in one respect approach the sensations of a man in solitary confinement.

Then imagine that the sight of this same gaunt vista every day causes you a feeling of almost physical nausea, that you keep in your cell, or somebody else's, as much as possible to escape it, and you may perhaps realize a fractional part of the circle of the disagreeable sensations of a man who has had the "liberty of the prison" for, say, six months.

As a rule such emotions are subconscious, but they come to the surface when the periodical attack of prison sickness of the soul lays hold of you, a temporary affection of the mind which is

very disagreeable to the individual who suffers from it, and may have unpleasant effects on his companions and friends. We used to hide these attacks as carefully as we could from one another.

Originally the prison had been used for criminals undergoing light sentences of two or three years and less, and for remand prisoners. One entire block had been used for the latter. There the cells were superior to those in the remainder of the building, where there were stone floors, very small windows, and no artificial light, while the beds consisted of boards on an iron frame and a paillasse. In the remand cells the floor was covered with red linoleum, and in this part landings and corridors were covered with the same material, there were larger windows, spring mattresses hinged to the wall, and—luxury beyond belief to a man from Ruhleben camp—electric lamps.

Except when special punishment was being inflicted, the political prisoners, among whom I count the civil prisoners of war, inhabited this better part of the prison, comprising perhaps three hundred cells around one yard.

Over a year before my arrival the German military authorities had taken over the greater part of the Stadtvogtei for their own prisoners.

Only a small portion was still occupied by the civil prison authorities and their charges. One or two of the latter occasionally appeared in our wing, in the charge of a civil warder, to do an odd job. They were permanently used in the kitchen, the bath and disinfecting place, and before the furnace.

In the military part of the prison N. C. O.'s of the army acted as warders for the military and political prisoners.

Of the former there were always a great many. They were undergoing punishment for slight breaches of discipline, or were remanded there awaiting trial before a court martial. Occasionally a number of French soldiers, and now and again an English Tommy or tar, were incarcerated among them. When this happened, and we heard of it, we tried to help them with food, tobacco, and cigarettes. It was very seldom that we succeeded, as we were not allowed on corridors the cells of which were used for military prisoners.

Since, however, the remand block did not quite suffice for the political and civilian prisoners of war, we occasionally found ourselves in the military block, though quartered above the soldiers on separate corridors. In this fashion, and on occasional trips through the prison to

see the doctor or get something from the kitchen, we saw and heard enough of the treatment meted out to the German soldiers to form an opinion of their sufferings.

In this the most cherished traditions of the German Army, and of the German N. C. O.'s, were rigidly adhered to. We never heard one of the poor prisoners being spoken to in an ordinary voice by their jailers. They were shouted at, jeered at, abused, beaten, and bullied in every conceivable way. Their part of the prison was in a continual uproar from the voices of the N. C. O.'s, who evidently enjoyed the privilege of torturing in perfect safety their fellow-beings.

Sometime during 1917 an N. C. O. who had spent most of his life in England came to the prison. I heard him talk with one of my friends one evening. A few days after, on my way to the kitchen, I had the unpleasant experience of seeing him break up one of his charges. The man had obviously had a dose before I arrived on the scene, for he was sobbing in his pitch-dark cell, while the N. C. O. was talking at him in a way that made my blood boil.

A few weeks before this happened, a friend of ours, a former A. S. C. man, had shot into the cell where I was sitting with a chum. He was

laughing queerly, highly excited and pale. "Look into the yard, look into the yard!" he cried, jumping on a table underneath the window. We followed as fast as we could, but were just too late. This is what had happened:

A Black Maria had been driven into the yard. Two or three N. C. O.'s had surrounded it and opened the door, and one of them had climbed inside. The next moment a German cavalryman, manacles on wrists and ankles, was pitched literally head over heels on to the stone pavement of the yard, where he lay, seemingly stunned. Two of the N. C. O.'s grabbed him by the collar and, kicking the motionless form, dragged him through the gates, which closed after them.

Most of the military prisoners were kept in dark cells. I do not know for how long this kind of punishment may be inflicted, but I believe six weeks is the maximum term. Imagine what it means to spend only two weeks in a perfectly dark, comfortless room on bread and water, sleeping on bare boards without blankets. Yet that, as it appeared, would be a very ordinary sentence.

This kind of punishment could be inflicted on anybody who was directly under military law, as we prisoners of war were. During my seven-

teen months in prison, it occurred only once that an Englishman, an ex-navy man, got a week of it. My particular friends and I were able to get a well-cooked, hot meal to him on most days. When he came out, he vowed he could have stuck a month of it, thanks to our ministrations, but his drawn face seemed to belie his words.

While the military prisoners had their food sent in from a barracks outside—judging from what we saw of it, it was rather good—we were supplied from the prison kitchen. The food varied somewhat in quality and quantity at different times. In 1914 and again in the following year it was nauseous, and so insufficient that after four weeks in prison young men found it impossible to mount the four flights of stairs to the top corridor in less than half an hour. When I arrived it happened to be comparatively good for a few weeks. The amount one got would have kept a man alive, though in constant hunger tortures, for perhaps six months, if he was in good condition to start with.

Breakfast was at 7:30 and consisted of a pint of hot black fluid, distantly resembling very thin coffee in taste, and a piece of bread weighing eight ounces, black, but much better than the bread we were accustomed to in camp. A pint of soup was served for dinner, but there was

never any meat in it. Rumor had it that meat was occasionally added but disappeared afterward. The staple substance in the beginning was potatoes, with mangel-wurzels during the following winter. By far the best soup, which disappeared from the bill of fare altogther for a long time, contained plenty of haricot-beans. It was usually given out on Saturdays or Sundays, and tasted rather good. Another one, tolerable for a hungry man, consisted of a sort of black bean, with hard shells but mealy kernels, and potatoes. A fish soup appeared on the menu three times a week; fortunately one could smell it as soon as the big pails left the kitchen at the other end of the building. This gave one a chance of accumulating the necessary courage to face it in one's bowl. It really was horrible beyond words.

At about five o'clock a pint of hot water with barley was intended to furnish the last meal of the day. Often there was less than a pint of fluid, and most often the barley was entirely absent. But the water had always a dirty blue color; consequently it did not even appeal to one's æsthetic sense. On Sundays these rations were sometimes supplemented by a pickled herring or a small piece of sausage. I could never bring myself to touch these.

Subsistence on the prison food exclusively would have been almost impossible. I am not speaking from the point of view of the average man, who has had plenty all his life, but as a one-time prisoner of war in Germany, who has seen what incredibly little will keep the flame of life burning, at least feebly.

Fortunately, almost all the politicals or prisoners of war obtained extra sustenance in some way or another, although the majority of the Poles and Russians did so only occasionally and in small quantities.

As far as the British were concerned, we got enough food from England in our parcels to do entirely without the prison diet. Those amongst us who found themselves temporarily short of eatables simply drew from others who were better supplied.

I had had a foretaste of prison in Cologne in November, 1914, which had not been encouraging. Consequently I felt apprehensive enough, while mounting the stairs behind the N. C. O. on the morning of my arrival.

The prison being very full, only a convict cell ten feet long and five wide was available for me, into which I was thrust without ceremony. A small window, barred, and high up in the nar-

row wall, faced the door. The bed on the left was hinged to the brick work and folded flat against it. A stool in the corner by the door was balanced on the other side by the hot-water pipes for heating. Farther along, toward the window, a small double shelf, with three pegs underneath, took the place of wardrobe, cupboard, and bookcase. It held a Prayer Book, a New Testament, an earthenware plate, bowl and mug, a wooden salt-cellar, a tumbler, and a knife, fork, and spoon. Against one side of it hung a small printed volume of prison rules and a piece of cardboard, showing a dissected drawing of the shelves, with the contents in regulation order, and an inventory underneath. In the center of the wall a small table was hinged and fastened like the bed. A Bible text above decorated the cell.

When in the course of the morning bed-linen and a towel were issued to me, I was vastly pleased. I had not expected such luxuries. The former consisted of a coarse gray bedcloth, an enormous bag of the same material, but checkered in blue, and another small one of the same kind. The big bag was to serve as a cover for the two blankets, which were to be folded inside; the small one was a pillow-slip.

Dinner meant another welcome interruption

in the difficult task of settling down, and, since it was Saturday, turned out to be bean soup. Although the quantity was far short of what I required, particularly in my famished state, it appeared so tasty, so far beyond anything I had been accustomed to in camp as far as German rations were concerned, that I was beginning to think myself in clover.

Still, I was in solitary confinement. How long was this state of affairs to last? I had asked the man in charge of the canteen, a British prisoner who paid me a visit in his official capacity. He did not know. He had had four and a half months after his escape of the previous summer. The N. C. O.'s refused to commit themselves, if they answered my questions at all. So I tried to face the prospect of being shut up in a small cell, with no company but my own, for five months. On this basis I worked out the final date, made a very rough calendar, and thereafter at 11 A.M., the hour of my arrival in the Stadtvogtei, marked with great ceremony the termination of every twenty-four hours in "solitary."

I was not examined again, contrary to my expectations, and my clever plans, framed in Vreden prison, of "diddling the Boche" into a forgiving frame of mind could not be tested. My

hopes of a glimpse of Ruhleben camp and my friends were not realized. The term of my solitary confinement evidently was regarded as a state secret, not to be communicated even to the person whom it most concerned. This was a policy always pursued by the *Kommandantur* in Berlin—whether out of sheer malice or callous indifference I don't know. Since I was the first escaper to be punished under a new regulation, there was no precedent to form an opinion from; but I did not know that, and consequently expected the same term of "solitary" as other men before me. Those who came after me were not permitted to have much doubt about the subject. We saw to that.

On the morning of the second day I was told that, in addition to solitary confinement, punishment diet had been ordered by the powers that were. One day out of every three (for four weeks) I was to receive bread and water only. It sounded unpleasant. The canteen man, who came to see me every day for a few minutes, assured me that this was something new, quite outside his experience, and, being pressed, cheered me vastly by consenting to my expressed opinion that it might, perhaps, indicate a correspondingly short term of "solitary."

As it turned out, the punishment diet proved

the reverse of what it was intended to be, an aggravation. In filling power, twenty-four ounces of bread were far superior to the ordinary prison food, and much more palatable than fish soup. Very soon I began to look forward to my "hard" days.

On the morning of the third day a different N. C. O. took charge of my corridor and me. I cannot speak too highly of him. Good-natured and disinterestedly kind, he made my lot as easy as possible. Knowing a little about prison routine by now, I had got up before the clanging of the prison bell had sounded, apprehensive of being late. Then I set to work cleaning my cell, scrubbing the floor and dusting the "furniture," and was quite ready when the doors were opened to permit us to empty the cell utensils and get fresh water. This was soon accomplished, and I lingered outside in the corridor to enjoy the "view." Not far from me a Polish prisoner was cleaning the balcony floor, and the N. C. O. —let us call him Kindman—was trying hard to make the Pole understand that the water he was using was too dirty for the purpose. The poor Pole, not comprehending a word, was working away doggedly, while Kindman was gradually raising his voice to a shriek in his efforts to make his charge understand, without producing

the slightest effect. He was not at all nasty about it, as one would have expected from a German N. C. O.; he merely substituted vocal effort for his lack of knowledge of Polish.

"I tell you, you are to use clean water, not dirty water, clean water, not dirty water, dirty water no good, no good," shaking his head. Pause, to get a fresh breath. Roaring: "Clean water, clean, clean, clean!" Despairingly he glanced in my direction. I fetched my own pail, full of clean water, put it beside the Pole's, and, stirring it with my hand, nodded vigorously. Then, pointing to the thick fluid in the other pail, I made the sign of negation. The Pole understood.

"You cleaned your cell before opening time this morning?" Kindman asked a little later. "You need n't do that. I 'll get you a *Kalfacter*—a man to do the dirty work for you. You 're a prisoner of war. You are allowed these privileges. There are plenty of Poles here who 'll be only too glad to do it for a mark a week."

After some hesitation I assented. In camp I had perhaps taken a foolish pride in doing everything myself, with the exception of washing my underclothes. Now, in prison, I had a Kalfacter to scrub and clean. Instead, I began

to do my own washing, not liking to entrust it to the doubtfully clean hands of a Pole.

"I 'll get you a better cell," was Kindman's next announcement. A few days after I moved into one of the remand cells with its comfortable bed, its nice red "lino" floor, and a bright electric light burning up to nine o'clock, while hitherto I had sat in darkness of an evening.

So far so good. There were no terrible physical hardships to endure. It was unpleasant not to have enough food. I did get some help from my fellow-countrymen, but parcels were arriving irregularly just then, and it was little they could spare me. My own had stopped altogether, and I had only very little money to buy things with, and that borrowed, and consequently it had to be hoarded like a miser's until I could get some of my own. I was always hungry, and often could not sleep for griping pains, while pictures of meals I had once eaten, and menus I would order as soon as I got to England, kept appearing before me.

It was a red-letter day when my hand-bag arrived from the sanatorium. Besides the clothes, it contained several tins of food, which I determined to consume as sparingly as possible. That, however, was easier planned than done. Knowing the food to be within reach, I simply

could not keep my hands from it. It all went in two days. I remember getting up in the middle of the night to open a tin containing a Christmas pudding, and eating it cold to the last crumb. Marvelous to relate, I went peacefully to sleep after that.

The actual treatment in "solitary" was much better than I had hoped for in my most optimistic moments. Mentally, however, I suffered somewhat during the first fortnight or three weeks. I had to battle against the worst attack of melancholia I had ever experienced. I never lost my grip of myself entirely, but came very near succumbing to absolute despair. The uncertainty about the duration of my punishment, the cessation of all letters and parcels from Blighty at a time when I most wanted them, the fear that my correspondence would merely wander into the waste-paper basket of a German censor, and last, but not least, the lack of response from my friends in camp to my post-cards—all combined to depress my spirits horribly.

I began to wish heartily that I had made a daylight attempt from the guard-house, which certainly would have ended my troubles one way or another. The drop from the balcony to the stone flags below had an unholy fascination.

For a number of days I gazed down every moment of the few minutes I was allowed outside my cell.

In the beginning of the war I had read of the attempted escape of a British officer from a fortress in Silesia. When he was apprehended somewhere in Saxony, he committed suicide with his razor. "What a fool!" had run my unsympathetic comment to my friends; "what did he want to do that for?" Now I could not forget his tragic end, and not only understood his action but almost admired him for it.

Every afternoon the other men in solitary confinement and I spent an hour—from three to four o'clock—walking in single file round the yard. An N. C. O., with a big gun strapped to his waist, kept guard over us, and had been ordered to see that we did not talk together. With an indulgent man on guard it was occasionally possible to get in a word or two, even to carry on a conversation for ten minutes or so. In this way I made the acquaintance of all the other Englishmen who were in the same position as I.

As I became more cheerful, I began to relish the books which were sent to me by the other English prisoners, and to look about for means of snatching what enjoyment I could under the

circumstances. Two visits to the prison doctor for the treatment of "sleeplessness" gave me opportunities of chatting for half an hour with my friend Ellison, who faked up some complaint on the same days.

My punishment diet was to end on the 8th of May. That over, I expected another four months under lock and key, until the 10th of September.

On the 7th of May, while tramping round the yard, the sergeant-major, second in command, came in and beckoned me to him.

"You 've finished your 'solitary'!" he said.

"Do you mean to say to-day?" I asked. "Am I to have my cell door open, and may I see the other men?"

When the hour of exercise was over, I sped up the stairs, taking four steps at a stride, and searched for Kindman.

"I 'm out of 'solitary,' " I bawled. "I 'm going to see the other chaps!"

"Hey, wait a moment," he cried. "I must lock your cell door first."

"But I tell you I 'm out of 'solitary'!"

"I believe you, though I don't know officially. I 'm not going to lock you in, but lock the door I will. If we leave it open, you 'll find all your things gone when you come back. These Poles

would take anything they can lay their hands on, and small blame to them. Most of them have n't a shirt to their back."

I did not return to my cell until lock-up time, feeling comfortably replete from various teas I had had, and my throat raw from incessant talking.

The part of our block reserved for men in solitary confinement, one side of the triangle, was separated from the rest by iron gates on each landing. These gates barred access to the military part as well. They were always kept locked. To clamber over them was easy enough; to be seen doing so spelled seven days' cells. My first care, consequently, was to get a cell "in front of the gate." This term was equivalent among us for ordinary confinement as opposed to solitary, for, in ordinary circumstances, nobody would willingly stay in a cell "behind the gate" if not in "solitary," and was, in fact, not supposed to do so.

An unexpected physical phenomenom, which I afterward observed in others, made itself unpleasantly felt in my case. The first days following my release from "behind the gate" I was extremely nervous and restless; at times I longed to be back in "solitary" with the cell door securely locked upon me.

CHAPTER XIII

CLASSES AND MASSES IN THE STADTVOGTEI

THE prisoners interned in the Stadtvogtei were divided into two classes, the aristocrats, or rather the plutocrats, and the rest, thus repeating faithfully the state of affairs in the outer world.

To the former belonged all the British without exception, a few occasional Frenchmen and Belgians, a number of Russians of education and means, temporarily some German socialists—they would be disgusted if they read this—and one or two German undesirables, adventurers and high-class pickpockets, who had come out of prison recently, but were probably not considered safe enough to be at large.

The "rest" was composed of an ever-changing mass of Russian and Polish laborers, never less than two hundred and fifty in number.

Wealth admitted to the upper class. The possibility of procuring food was wealth. This explains why all the British were plutocrats, for they received parcels from home, and had more

food, as a rule, than anybody else. Frenchmen and Belgians, on the contrary, held a precarious position on the outside edge of society. Not having friends in Germany who could supply them with food, as was the case with the Russian and German plutocrats, and their parcels from France and Belgium being exceedingly few, they were frequently in straits. But then, of course, they were "taken up" by some of the "plutocratic" Englishmen, who chose their associates according to other standards than those of digestible possessions.

As far as malice aforethought is concerned, Englishmen have been, and are, the worst treated of all the prisoners of war in Germany. I believe the Russians had a harder time of it from sheer neglect by the higher authorities, being delivered over to the tender mercies of the German N. C. O. and private soldier, clothed with a little brief authority. This class of human beings was always chary of tackling Englishmen, either singly or in small groups.

In the Stadtvogtei the usual order was reversed. There we were the cocks of the walk among the prisoners, and, in time, entirely unofficial privileges developed appertaining to us as Englishmen. They were inconspicuous enough in themselves. An incident will serve

as an illustration. It was the more startling in its significance as I had no idea that the privilege in question had come to exist until it had happened.

It was in the summer of 1917. The prisoners in ordinary confinement were allowed to be in the courtyard at certain hours of the day, but were supposed to enter and leave it only at the full and half-hours. I had observed this rule so far, except on a very few occasions, when I had asked the doorkeeper to let me in and out at odd times. I was doing certain work for the British colony, which now and then called me there on business.

One morning I happened to be walking about with Captain T., then recently released from solitary confinement for an attempt at escaping. We were waiting for the door to be unlocked to leave the yard, and when the doorkeeper opened it between times, I, followed by the captain, passed through, nodding my acknowledgment to the N. C. O. On seeing my companion, he stepped up to him threateningly and shouted, "What d'you mean by coming out, you ——" I had not grasped the situation, but jumped between them instinctively and said, "Hold on. This is an Englishman!"

"I beg your pardon, I didn't know. I

thought he was a Pole. I 've never seen him before."

Captain T. had missed the meaning of the affair, and I had to explain it to him. I went up the stairs to our cell feeling very chesty.

Up to the beginning of June, 1916, the British numbered less than twenty. During the course of the summer and autumn our colony grew until we were about thirty-four strong. More than half of the new arrivals were escapers. We had our experiences in common, and a class feeling, even some class characteristics. We certainly all felt equally hostile to that particular section in Ruhleben camp whose attitude toward us was summed up in these words: "Aren't you ashamed of yourselves? Can't you stay and take your gruel?" We were actually asked these questions.

K. was the doyen of our group. He was older than the rest. His attempt, with a companion, in April, 1915, to which I have referred in a previous chapter, was the first made from Ruhleben, and he had been at liberty longer than any one else—more than three weeks. He was one of the most charming men one could wish to meet, though, as he was a Scotsman, it took some little time to break down his reserve. Hailing

from the same part of the kingdom, there were W. and M. who had been in prison since June, 1915, followed soon after by Wallace Ellison, my friend and comrade-to-be, and another man—both excellent fellows. Wallace was my neighbor on the right, as K. was on the left, when I had succeeded in getting a cell on the top floor, coveted on account of the light and air and the greater expanse of sky visible from the window. Of some of the men who came after me I shall speak later on.

One of my companions, not an escaper, was Dr. Béland, a well-known Canadian. He had been residing in Belgium when the war broke out, and, although a physician, he had been arrested in the summer of 1915, and sent to prison in Berlin. The Germans regarded him as a member of an enemy government, and justified their action in their own way, by saying that this eliminated his standing as a member of the medical profession. As a matter of fact, Dr. Béland was not a member of the Cabinet in Canada, and had not been for some time. He belonged, however, to the House of Commons.

Dr. Béland was a man of great personal charm. His wide experience, his high good humor, which never failed under the ordinary,

trying conditions of life in prison, his readiness to help all those in distress, and his brilliant powers as a conversationalist, made it a delight to meet him. In the course of time we got to know each other well, and in January, 1917, he rendered us, particularly a friend and myself, a great service by the delicate handling of an affair which almost got us sent to a penal prison.

Little consideration was ordinarily shown him by the German authorities. When they had an opportunity, as once happened to be the case, they treated him with a refined cruelty which created universal indignation among his companions.

Apart from the British who were permanent boarders at our establishment, occasional birds of passage on their way to Ruhleben camp alighted there for a night or two. Most of them were boys who had been residing in Belgium. Unable to get away when the invasion overwhelmed that unhappy country, and not having attained the "internable" age of seventeen, they had been compelled to stay on, until the day of their seventeenth birthday brought their arrest and subsequent internment as a Greek gift from the conquerors.

Among the other plutocrats, whatever their nationality, we found some cheery and inter-

esting companions. Several of the socialists were men of high intellectual attainments and charming manners. We were on the best terms with them, a circumstance which, I believe, gave rise to some uneasiness to the prison governor. He certainly had always something nasty to say about them, looking down from the height of his semi-education upon men who knew what they were talking about, who knew—none better —the German governing classes, and who were perfectly frank about them. We often had them to tea in our cell. They gave us sufficient insight into the pre-war intrigues which led to the catastrophe, and into the falsehoods and falsifications of the German Government, to make us catch our breath.

The component parts of the "rest," the Polish and Russian laborers, came and went. We did not get into real contact with them. The difficulties of language stood in the way, for one thing. Poor and ignorant, most of them illiterate, they were greatly to be pitied. With very little besides the prison food to live on, and constantly maltreated by the N. C. O.'s, it is still somewhat of a marvel to me that they did not succumb. Their powers of passive resistance, their ability under such circumstances to keep on living, and even to retain a certain amount

of cheerfulness, can be explained only by their low intellectual and emotional standard and the centuries of slavery or semi-slavery their ancestors had endured.

The most pitiable objects were boys, children almost, who occasionally appeared among them. Tiny mites they were as to stature, with the faces of old men on bodies of children of eight or nine years of age. They, too, had been recruited by German agents. Most of them seemed to have been sent into the coal-mines, where hard work and little food had broken them completely. Their actual years were usually between thirteen and sixteen.

With their mental powers almost destroyed, and nearly too weak to walk, they used to sit in their cells or stand listlessly about the corridors, their eyes lusterless and vacant.

Whenever any of them were about, they were taken on by some of us as pensioners. But even a hearty meal set before them did not bring a smile to their lips or a gleam into their eyes. Like graven images they wolfed it down, tried to kiss your hand or the hem of your coat, and went to sit or stand as before.

CHAPTER XIV

PRISON LIFE AND OFFICIALS

NOT long before I arrived in prison, a change had taken place in its official personnel. Formerly, the internment side and the military side had been under different commanders.

What I heard from my friends about the character of the man in charge of the interned, previous to my coming, caused me to congratulate myself upon my good luck in not having to encounter him. He had been an out-and-out bully. He was transferred to Ruhleben camp later on, where he went under the name of "Stadtvogtei Billy."

The officer in command of the prison after "Stadtvogtei Billy" had gone, had charge of the interned and military prisoners. This *Oberleutnant,* to give him his German title, was a schoolmaster in civil life. As such he was a government official and duly imbued with the prescribed attitude of mind.

Officially we had not much to do with him. Occasionally we had to approach him for some

small request or other, and found him courteous enough then. When he took the initiative, something disagreeable usually happened, or was going to happen.

Often he called upon some of us for a chat. That was always something of a trial. He never could get rid of his *ex cathedra* manners; he knew only the approved official version of whatever he was talking about, and mostly chose rather unfortunate themes for his discourses. "Prussian superiority in everything, but particularly in war," "the eminent qualities of the Prussian rulers," "Prussian strategy in war favorably compared with that of other nations, particularly the British," "Jewish treason and wickedness"—such were his favorite topics. Quite frankly he ran down everything British and American. The United States in particular was sighing under the absolute rule of two wicked autocrats, one called the "President," the other the "Almighty Dollar." They were inhabited partly by Germans and partly by a mass of ignorant and unteachable fools and cowards, who, unable to grasp the intellectual and moral righteousness of the German nation, spouted against them, but were afraid to act. He used to bore us to tears, and his departure was always followed by sighs of relief.

Of middle size, he was well built, and kept himself superbly fit. He knew a little about boxing, and often commanded one of the Englishmen to be his sparring partner in one of the big empty cells of the military part. His tactics were to strike blows as hard as he could. Once or twice this was discouraged by his opponent.

The sergeant-major came officially into contact with us every day when he made his rounds. He was a handsome fellow, stout, with almost white hair and a fresh complexion, much younger than he looked, and an old army man. With the mannerism of a German N. C. O., he was a kindly fellow at heart, and easy to get on with. Although his voice could be heard thundering somewhere in the prison at any hour of the day, his bark was ever so much worse than his bite.

The N. C. O.'s acting as warders in our section were always considerate to us and the other plutocrats, though in different degrees and for different reasons. One or two treated us decently, quite spontaneously, and strictly within the limits of their duty. As for the rest, a *quid pro quo* was the more or less openly confessed basis of their behavior toward us.

The scarcity of food in Germany made it in-

expensive and easy for us to keep the wheels oiled. A tin of herring or of dripping, or a few biscuits went a very long way. I think we were perfectly justified in making these small donations.

The doctor visited the prison only for an hour or two every morning, except Sundays. Any one who was foolish enough to be taken suddenly and seriously ill after he had gone, had to wait until the next day, and, if he carried his stupidity so far as to do it on a Saturday, he could not hope for medical attention until Monday morning.

Dr. Béland always helped as far as he could in such cases. Many a night he was fetched out of bed to give first aid. He was handicapped in this work of charity by his lack of drugs and stimulants.

There was a chapel in the prison, whose parson was supposed to look after our spiritual welfare. Personally, I never spoke to him, nor did I approach his shop. The expression fits, as I shall try to demonstrate.

Among us we had an engineer, M., who felt it necessary to observe his religious duties, and wished to take part in the services held in the chapel. He went to the parson to proffer his request.

"The Lord God is not for the English," were the words in which he refused it.

The unchanging routine of our prison day was as follows: the doors of the cells, locked during the night, were opened again at half-past seven o'clock in the morning. While the Kalfacters cleaned the cells, we prepared breakfast in the kitchen. The meal over, some went into the courtyard for a walk, while others employed themselves in whatever way they felt most inclined. The canteen was open from ten o'clock until half-past ten. At eleven o'clock the midday soup was distributed. It did not concern us Englishmen, for we never took our share. The kitchen was opened again now for the preparation of the midday meal, and there was usually a rush to secure one or more of the gas-rings. The cleaning of vegetables, peeling of potatoes, and other preparations had been previously undertaken in the cells by all hands. The cooking itself was attended to by the cook of the mess and day. Soon after eleven the distribution of parcels from England was to be expected. On their arrival an N. C. O. went into the yard and shouted the names of the lucky ones, generally mispronouncing them. Leaving everything to take care of itself, their owners went helter-skelter down to the office

to take possession of their packages. From half-past three o'clock till five it was again possible to brew tea and cook, and from four to six to be in the yard. At seven o'clock we were locked up for the night. In summer, artificial light was not permitted in the cells; in winter, the current was switched off at nine o'clock.

The most important question for us was that of the food-supply. If, accidentally, a week or two was barren of parcels, the man who missed them was apt to become a nuisance to his companions by his constant expressions of grieved astonishment about this "absolutely inexplicable stoppage." This was the case regardless of whether he had a month's supply in hand or not.

It did not mean that we were gluttons. Apart from the absolute necessity of receiving a sufficient amount of English food, parcels and letters were the links connecting us with the Old Country. When a link was broken we felt lost and forsaken. A cessation of letters had a similar effect. Our correspondence was limited to four post-cards and two letters a month. Communication between prisoners of war in different places of internment was prohibited. We were not informed of this, however, until the

summer of 1917. A great light dawned on me then, for I could understand at last why my friends in camp had not written to me.

While in "solitary" and for two months afterward, I had a struggle to make both ends meet as far as food was concerned. Only a modicum of my letters and parcels from England arrived. I was absolutely ignorant of the fact that friends were helping me with a generosity for which I can never be sufficiently grateful. Having no relatives who could send me food, I applied at last to one of the organizations sending parcels to prisoners of war and was adopted by a generous lady in Southampton.

About that time I joined a mess of four. The pooling of our resources made them rather more than merely sufficient for us. I debated whether I should stop the last-named parcels. But there was always so much opportunity of helping others, and so much doubt whether our parcels would continue, that I said nothing.

Among a section of the British community it had always been considered an obvious duty to help their less fortunate compatriots with food, when they could afford it and the latter were in need. All new-comers required help until their parcels began arriving. Those who were

placed in solitary confinement had to be looked after during the term of their punishment, for they were not permitted to have their parcels.

At first this was all done without method and with resulting hardships to individuals. When coöperation among the greater number of the British prisoners was finally brought about, every man "behind the gate" received tea for breakfast, a hot dinner of canned meat and vegetables, and a substantial supper at five o'clock.

Occasionally we received cases of food from the Relief in Kind Committee at Ruhleben to be distributed among the British. Here again little method was observed at first. But in course of time the organization was perfected.

Up to the beginning of May, 1916, the prisoners had to heat their food on spirit stoves as best they might. Then fuel for these stoves became unobtainable, and the prison authorities turned one of the large cells on the top floor into a kitchen, installing a number of gas-rings at the private expense of the British colony. For a charge the equivalent of a cent, one could obtain a pint of boiling water or use one of the rings for half an hour.

As long as vegetables were obtainable, we fared very well. On our declaring that we could not take the prison food, the authorities issued potatoes to us by way of compensation. During

the winter of 1916–17 the scarcity of this vegetable became so great in the "Fatherland" that mangel-wurzels were generally used instead, of which we got our scanty share. It was a severe tax upon our culinary skill to disguise them sufficiently to make them eatable. Palatable they could not be made. I was cook at the time for a small mess and the sauces I manufactured with the help of curry-powder, pepper, salt, vinegar, and mustard, would haunt a professional cook to the end of his days.

I am afraid I have dwelt a long time upon this question of food. But then, it was the most important one for us. We never could escape it. Three times a day at least we were reminded of it by the necessity of preparing a meal. Our attitude toward food and eating was largely influenced by a feeling of insecurity. "How long will it be before our parcels stop arriving?" was a question ever present in our minds.

It must be admitted that we seldom lost our appetites, despite the fact that we could take little exercise. Officially, the only place to get this was the yard. Paved with granite blocks, it did not offer altogether ideal facilities. The sun reached the bottom of this well in one corner only during the three best months of the year. In fine, mild weather it was always so packed

with humanity—and that not of the cleanest kind—that the air was worse than in the cells. Except in rainy or cold weather it stagnated, and engendered a feeling of lassitude which often was the precursor of a headache.

Generally speaking, the prison was badly ventilated, although seemingly ample provision had been made for a change of air in the building. At certain hours of the day smells of the worst kind pervaded the corridors. In the broken light of the evening, the pall of fetid and evil air surrounding the whole place became visible to any one looking from an upper window across the yard toward the bright western sky. In spite of all, however, Swedish drill at night, occasional fierce romps with our friends, or a few rounds with the gloves in a space which permitted only a stand-up ding-dong way of sparring, kept us in tolerable health.

We were fortunate in having a considerable number of private books. In addition to these, the Ruhleben camp library sent us consignments which we returned for others. From serious and instructive books to the lightest kind of literature, we were plentifully supplied with reading matter.

Sometimes we managed to get hold of an English newspaper. They were on sale in Ber-

lin but strictly forbidden to us prisoners. The reason for this prohibition has always been to me one of the inexplicable vagaries of the German mind. The "Daily Telegraph" and the "Daily Mail" were read on the sly, mostly after lock-up time, by one after the other, until they fell to pieces.

The royal game of chess was a great consolation. It was played to excess, often resulting in staleness.

The first two escapers to arrive after me were C. and L., a happy combination of Scotland and Ulster. They had gotten away from camp in a very adventurous fashion, to be caught three days later by an unfortunate combination of love and flowers.

At dawn, one morning, they had found excellent cover in a clump of lilac bushes growing close to an unfrequented road. In the course of the morning a German soldier, fully armed, was passing their hiding-place, when he caught sight of the lilacs in bloom. Some flaxen-haired maiden must have been in his thoughts, for he started to gather a bunch of them. Only the best flowers would do, of course, but they were inside the thicket, away from the chance passer-by. With his eyes lifted in search of the blooms,

the soldier did not see the two fugitives until he trod on them. Before they had time to do anything, he had them covered with his rifle.

When C. and L. came out of "solitary," they and Wallace and I soon became good friends. Naturally, we discussed the chances of another attempt to escape from prison. If possible, we would make that attempt together. For this purpose it would be desirable to be in one cell.

There were four big cells on each landing at the three corners of the courtyard. They were by far the most desirable, with good company to share them with you. They had a water-tap and a private lavatory, and their cubic capacity per man was considerably greater than that of the single cells. When one of these on the fourth floor became temporarily empty at the beginning of July, the four of us asked for and obtained permission to take it.

We all felt a little doubtful about the experiment at first, but it turned out magnificently; and for all purposes we were a very strong combination.

As far as I was concerned, the happiest time of the whole of my three years as a prisoner of war was spent in that cell. I slept well again, and I lost the restless feeling which had obsessed me while in a cell by myself, for I had

gone through a time of great spiritual loneliness before C. and L. arrived. Now I simply basked and expanded in this circle of congenial companionship. I seldom cared to leave the cell, and almost ceased visiting my other friends in theirs.

Generally speaking, the internment in the Stadtvogtei was no worse than the internment in Ruhleben camp. The latter was healthier, and there were ever so many more distractions, with opportunities for sport and serious work. The camp could be almost pleasant in summer, but it was terrible in wet or cold weather. The prison was always the same, neither hot nor cold. Climatic conditions, the changes of the seasons, did not affect us at all. Ruhleben was one of the dirtiest places in the world; Stadtvogtei was always clean and dry.

We worked hard, nevertheless, to bring about our return to Ruhleben. Whether any of us preferred the life in camp or that in prison, on one point we were all agreed: the camp was much easier to escape from.

So we sent periodical petitions to the Kommandantur in Berlin for transfer to Ruhleben, and on the rare occasions when a representative

from the American Embassy or, later on, from the Dutch Legation, paid us an unexpected visit we never failed to complain bitterly about the injustice of being kept in prison. But these complaints did not avail. It was probably due to the comparative charm of the life in a big cell that no actual attempt was made by us four between June and October, 1916. Discussions of ways and means were frequent, of course, in secret meetings throughout the house. For a long time the plans under consideration always involved the destruction of iron bars in front of our windows and the erection of a light scaffolding made from table boards and legs. This scaffolding was to help us gain the roof, and less perilously than the method favored by our friend Wallace. But Wallace was a crag-climber in civil life. We understood perfectly that his hobby had affected his brain and would not allow him to climb to any high point unless he could, by stealth or cunning, do it in the most dangerous way. Under pressure, however, he was still sane enough to relinquish his idea—for this once. We applied the pressure. Once on the flat roof of our portion of the prison we were to traverse it for some distance, and then drop down the face of a blank wall, sixty

feet high, by means of a rope we had plaited from strings saved from our parcels. I doubt whether the rope was quite long enough.

We finally hit upon another plan. Its attractions were very tempting in comparison with the first one, and we tried to put it into execution.

If we could get out of our cell at night and open a window on the first floor, we could easily drop into the street. As I have mentioned in an earlier chapter, the windows of the prison overlooking the street were not barred on the outside except on the ground floor. These were made impassable by iron gratings on the inside which opened like a door, and were unlocked by the same key that fitted the locks of our cell doors. The windows themselves were opened by a hollow square key. A pair of small strong pliers would do as well.

The corridors were almost incessantly patrolled at night. The necessity of trying to dodge the patrol would be not only disturbing but somewhat difficult.

Next the stairs, on each landing, was a room used for various purposes. These rooms were not patrolled. The one on the first floor which was naturally the most attractive to us was labeled "CLERK." This too had the same

lock as the cell doors. In there we should be quite undisturbed while attending strictly to duty.

We made a key out of a piece of thick wire and the tin lid of a priceless beer-glass. The lid was beautifully and appropriately engraved. So was the glass, which had a considerable sentimental value. Wallace, the rightful owner, sacrificed the lid on the altar of the common weal. With the wire as a core we cast the key in a plaster-of-Paris mold and filed it to fit. C. filed it. He would not let anybody else touch it. He now holds it as his most treasured souvenir of the war.

It was not at all difficult to obtain the plaster of Paris for the mold. The making of the key was an extremely simple affair altogether, though it sounds extremely romantic.

The opening of the cell door was an outside job, for the lock was quite inaccessible from the inside with any of the instruments we possessed. One of us had to get himself locked out by mistake, hide somewhere in the prison, and release the others at the proper time. Wallace volunteered to do this. He got the job.

On the top floor of the building, in a sort of blind corner, was the prison library. It was separated from the rest of the corridor by a

wood-and-glass partition. Above its door was an opening large enough to offer an easy passage for Wallace's small but athletic frame. As the library would hardly be used after lock-up, Wallace would be more than reasonably safe there during his vigil.

We intended to walk from Berlin to the Baltic Sea and make the passage to the nearest Danish island in any kind of craft we could dishonestly come by.

"All there?" asked the N. C. O. in charge of our corridor at seven o'clock of the evening fixed for the new venture.

C. and I were sitting opposite each other at chess. L. was bending with knitted brows over another chess board. The stool opposite him was empty.

"Yes," I answered absently, without lifting my eyes from the board.

"Where 's Ellison?" using Wallace's surname.

I looked up and made a motion toward the privy our cell boasted.

"All right. *Gute Nacht.*"

"Good night, Herr Unterofficier!"

The door swung closed and the bolt shot home.

L. continued playing chess with himself, still with that concentrated look of his. C. was mean enough to take an unfair advantage of my inattention and declared "mate" after ten or twelve more moves.

Then we talked disjointedly with long pauses after each remark. "Wace must have managed all right." "Seems so." "Too early to do anything yet." "Oh, I don't know. If they come in here again to-night, the game will be up anyway." "Not necessarily; we might have luck." "We certainly need it for the next ten days or so." "Oh," with the long yawn of nervousness, "let 's eat." "All right, let 's eat." We ate. Then we started dressing. Double sets of underwear in my case, and also collar and tie. I had almost finished, though my two friends still looked pretty much as usual, when we heard footsteps approach our door and the rattle of the key in the lock. With a white stiff collar around my neck, albeit without coat or waistcoat, I took a flying leap toward the door and into such a position that the whole of my person except my face would be concealed by one of our two-storied bed structures. It was our N. C. O. who appeared through the opening door. Without coming farther than half a step

into the cell he handed me, who was nearest to him, a bundle of letters from "Blighty" and disappeared again.

We completed our preparations and then lay down on our bunks in order to get as much sleep as possible while there was a chance. We did not get much during the next five hours. We were under the nervous stress of having to wait for somebody else to act. The hours seemed to be of Jupiterian size. Occasionally one of us would turn over and mutter something, mostly commenting upon the situation we were in, expressing his views briefly and forcibly. Now and then I lost consciousness in brief spells of slumber. I think our emotions were not very different from those experienced by men who are waiting for the zero hour to go over the top. As my brief fighting experience was in the artillery, I cannot speak with authority.

At two o'clock, with a tremendous noise and without warning, a key turned in the lock and Wallace came into the room in his stocking-feet, carefully fastening the door on the inside by a little wooden latch. The latch was a strictly unofficial attachment of our own making.

We were up and around him before he had done with the door. "No use. We 're up against it," he whispered.

We were not absolutely unprepared for this. We had been alarmed at something during the afternoon of that day. I forget now precisely what it was. It had been somewhat intangible. Yet it had puzzled us a good deal. As Wallace had needed some assistance in getting into the library, we had been forced to take one or two of our comrades into the secret. We felt, of course, as sure of their trustworthiness as we were of our own, but it is always possible to make a mistake.

"I 'm certain they have a suspicion that something is afoot," Wallace explained, "and are merely lying low in order to catch us in the act. They may not know who it is. When I came out of the library I passed X.'s cell. The door was a quarter open. There was a light inside and they were talking. That pig Doran [one of the N. C. O.'s] was in there. I then sneaked down to the clerk's room in order to open the door. I could n't. Has none of you noticed that there is a countersunk screw through the bolt? Has any one of you ever seen that door used? Now, what are we to do?"

We decided not to go that night. We were unanimous. Briefly, Wallace told us the rest of his adventures while we crept between our blankets. I personally felt of a sudden very,

very tired. But, before I fell asleep I reasoned with mixed feelings that we might have pushed the attempt a little further.

We were up at an unusually early hour in order to remove all traces of our fell intent. We unpacked the two small grips we had wanted to take with us and put our extra clothes away. The cell, to appear as usual, required general tidying up.

Hoch, our N. C. O., thrust a startled face in upon us when he came to unlock the door at seven o'clock. As usual, L., wrapped in blankets up to his chin and over his ears, was placidly puffing clouds of smoke toward the ceiling. As usual, C. and I were performing our morning ablutions in front of the sink. As usual, Wallace was watching us sleepily from his elevated bunk next the door, waiting for his turn, and hoping that it might be long in coming.

Hoch, after his first swift survey while still in the corridor, had quickly advanced to the center of the room and looked immensely relieved when he had counted his chickens.

"Why, your door was unlocked!" he exclaimed. Wallace nodded sleepily.

"Yes, one of your fellows came in and disturbed us at six o'clock."

"Who was it?"

"Don't know. We were asleep and he woke us up. Very rude of him. He just looked in and walked away, and forgot to lock the door."

Hoch laughed loud and long, like a man who has had a bad jolt and finds himself unhurt. He was an Alsatian and as such was always more or less suspected of disloyalty. In order to shield him as much as possible we had chosen a night when he would not be on duty, but even so, he would have found himself in difficulties had we got away.

Friend Hoch was a smart man, however. Nothing further was said about the open door, but he didn't believe us; of that I 'm certain. Nothing had happened, so he let sleeping dogs lie, but he made up his mind that nothing should happen. He was uncomfortably vigilant from then on. He never locked up, after that, until he had made sure that we were all in our cell.

PART II

CHAPTER XV

A FRESH ATTEMPT

THE failure of our attempt had a stimulating effect upon us. Wallace, always ready to do anything at any time and under any circumstances, the more romantic and adventurous the better, nosed around on his own hook. C. and L. said little, but would have required no persuasion to do things which a person like me would have called foolhardy. I, myself, had been only too well aware of the many flaws in our previous plan to take its failure to heart. The biggest of these flaws was our intended procedure after we had broken prison. In the absence of a good opening I cogitated mainly upon the best way of action, once the start lay behind us. I will give here some of my reflections, because they shed light upon our subsequent proceedings.

To escape from the prison, a small amount of help from outside was more than desirable. To break out was not impossible; to do so carrying the necessary food and equipment

meant minimizing our chances very considerably, and they were slender indeed, at the best. Once outside, what were we to do? Was it possible to walk through the streets of Berlin at night carrying bundles and hand-bags? It must be remembered that crime was rife in Germany, and the police as inquisitive as monkeys. Could one go to a hotel and wait there for an early train on which to get away? To walk out of the capital appeared impossible, for we had heard that a considerable number of military police, with power to stop anybody, were always about, looking for deserters and watching the roads to the country. None of us knew a friendly soul in Germany of whom we could ask assistance, nor had we a knowledge of the capital and its seamy side, which would have enabled us to disappear in the under-world of criminals and to purchase assistance there.

In August, two Englishmen, who had escaped from Ruhleben and who had managed to live in different towns of Germany for several weeks, had joined our band of prisoners. They had had false passports, an absolute knowledge of the German language, and had been caught only through their own carelessness. Both were awaiting trial on a charge of traveling with false papers, and on one other

count. G., a tall, distinguished-looking man with a drawling voice and stately manners, had nothing to lose and everything to gain by another attempt. C. was approaching his forty-fifth birthday, and hoped for an exchange.

In September, S., another man from Ruhleben, had turned up. He said he was an escaper, but I had my doubts. I don't think he was British, even technically speaking, although the Germans considered him so. He was daring and clever, however, and had friends in Berlin, and there was no doubting his sincerity when he swore that he would not stay in the Stadtvogtei at the pleasure of the Germans, even if an attempt to escape cost him his life.

G. and S. chummed up with each other. A German with an English name, of doubtful calling in civil life but of powerful physique, joined them. Toward the end of October, Wallace found out definitely that something was afoot, S. being the leading spirit.

Without conceit I believe I can say that my friends and I were regarded by all who knew us as "dead safe." Nothing on earth, not excepting faithlessness on the part of those we trusted, or had to trust, would have made us squeal. We must naturally have appeared an easy prey for any unscrupulous man, since he

would have nothing to fear. Private vengeance would have been far too costly for us.

This being so, Wallace's questions received ready answers. S. was about to obtain a key for the main gate of the prison. A blank was being filed right then by one of his friends outside, to an approximate fit, according to a rough drawing he (S.) had made after a chance inspection of the key in the hands of the gatekeeper. When the rough key was delivered he would have to file it to a working fit. This done he and his party would wait for an opportune moment on a dark evening and walk out of the prison by the front door.

The scheme was an excellent one, as far as it went, and S. had no objections to our joining his party. On the contrary, he seemed to my liking far too pleased. Why should he receive us with open arms, when it was patent that the danger of discovery increased with numbers? Without promising definitely to join his party we agreed to help him in fitting his key and getting away. Almost three weeks went by before everything was ready, and this brought us into the middle of November.

This was another serious drawback. For a long tramp the weather was decidedly too cold. We could not hope to be able to take along even

an inadequate equipment. Under these circumstances the hardships would be such as to make sleeping in the open for a week, or a fortnight, impossible. The use of the railway would be imperative, which was against C. and L.'s chances. Neither of them spoke a word of German, and both were so striking in appearance as to make their arrest almost a foregone conclusion. C. was about six feet tall, broad out of proportion, and the picture of well-nourished health; while L., with black hair, black bushy eyebrows on overhanging bone ridges, a mustache the like of which had never been seen in Germany, and a typical seaman's roll, could have passed about as well for a full-blooded Chinaman as for a son of the "Fatherland." A word from Wallace or me would make them withdraw, but that word we could not easily bring ourselves to speak.

Wallace, on the other hand, did his utmost to convince me that we must not let this opportunity slip by. The other conspirators would certainly go, and their escape would close this one avenue forever.

"If you stay behind, I 'll go with the others." Another quandary. He would not get through, I felt sure, for he proposed to throw in his lot with S., looking to him for help, which he would

get only as long as it suited S. and no longer. As we had no maps, and Wallace on his first escape had walked only a few miles, and those with a guide, our only chance lay in striking my old route. On this second trip we might cover the distance in two nights, which meant spending only one day in hiding. My knowledge of the disposition of sentries along that stretch of frontier might possibly get us across, even under adverse circumstances.

I had never felt so uncomfortable in my life as I felt when I had to explain to C. and L., that it appeared impossible to take them along with us, and my feeling of utter shamefacedness was only intensified by their immediate and good-humored withdrawal.

To take anything with us beyond what we could put in our pockets was not to be thought of. Could we send out a parcel or two and have them deposited at a station cloak-room? Neither Wallace nor I could. We had never sent parcels from the prison. S.? Yes. He was eternally sending them away. He proffered his services, which were accepted. A parcel was handed over to him to be deposited at a certain station, the cloak-room ticket to be handed to us. When the ticket came—there was only one—he showed it to me, but ex-

plained that he could not give it up, as some of his own luggage was booked on it. He would go with us for our parcel, or get it for us in another way. We were to meet him in Berlin anyhow, for we had accepted his offer to procure us quarters where we could stay a day or two in safety. His further assistance, which was to make our "getting through" a moral certainty, I had declined both for Wallace and myself.

On the morning of the 16th of November I said I would not go. At four o'clock I said I would, and meant it. Between five and six we went.

It was already dark at this time. On the ground floor and next to the stairs was the office of the prison. From its door one had an unobstructed view of the whole length of the corridor and of that part of the gateway connecting the street with the yard, nearest to the front gate. Fortunately the door was always kept shut at this time of the year on account of the cold.

The gatekeeper had his office in one of the cells off the corridor. He could not see the gateway without leaving the cell. The gateway was at right angles with the corridor, and

not very well lighted. Two steps led down to its level. In passing from the corridor into the yard the front door was to the immediate right of the steps.

At this period of our imprisonment the prisoners had access to the yard at any moment during recreation time. It was cleared for the day at half-past six o'clock. Wallace and I went there at the appointed time—five o'clock—wearing our overcoats, as usual, but our best clothes underneath. The others were already there.

A sixth man had been admitted to the party, a German stockbroker. This upset Wallace so much that the slightest attempt at persuasion on my part would have made him give up the venture altogether. But now that I had made up my mind I rather urged him on.

That morning an N. C. O. had come on duty at the gate who some months before had insisted upon being armed while on duty, and who had declared his intention of preventing any one from leaving the building alive, if an attempt should be made. Since he was bound to discover the open gate almost at once, we had a fair chance of getting hurt, which greatly perturbed G.

At length the moment of action came. S., fol-

lowed by the rest of the conspirators, made as if to return to his cell. Once inside, he went straight to the front gate, while the powerful German put his back against the gate we had just passed through, to prevent anybody from following us. Wallace and I walked up the steps into the corridor and stood there, chatting, to screen S. while he unlocked the door. He failed in his first attempt. The second time he was successful.

We slipped through the door and found ourselves in the deserted street in front of the prison. The others, contrary to agreement, broke into a run and disappeared around a corner on the left. Wallace and I walked leisurely until we turned underneath a railroad bridge to the right.

We felt somewhat relieved when we had turned the corner. During the walk up the street we had expected every moment to hear the crackle of automatics beginning behind us. It is one thing to face a gun; it is another to expect to be shot in the back.

We were to meet S. and G. at a certain café close to the railway station where our parcel had been deposited, but it took us a long time to get there, as we did not know our way about Berlin, and were unable to hire a taxi or

droshky. They had almost given up hope when we arrived.

We sat down at their table in a well-lighted, large room. Everybody seemed at ease except me. I felt nervous, but tried to hide it. During the next half-hour S. left us several times to telephone, as he said, to the house where Wallace and I were to stay. Each time he came back saying he could not get the connection.

"Let us go and get our luggage, then," I suggested.

"Didn't you say you wanted to buy some things?" S. queried.

"Yes; we want to see whether we can get a couple of oilsilks, two water-bottles, a portmanteau, and, if possible, a couple of sleeping-bags."

"You 'd better hurry up, then. The shops will be open only for another hour. We 'll meet you at Café —— at ten o'clock. In the meantime I 'll arrange for your lodgings."

I was doubtful, but we had trusted him so far; it seemed foolish and impolitic to show suspicion now. Moreover, to have to carry the parcel would be a nuisance if not a danger. So we agreed and left them.

In a big department-store we bought the arti-

cles mentioned. The sleeping-bags were thin, by no means waterproof and almost useless, but better than nothing. Clothed as we were, in ordinary town clothes only, I was much concerned to get what extra protection from the cold we could.

While I was completing this purchase, a shop-walker addressed me and followed up his introductory remarks with a reference to the latest air raid on London and a pious wish as to the fate of the d——d English. I heartily endorsed his sentiments, while Wallace, with dancing eyes, grinned facetiously at me. Just at closing time we left the store and took the handbag to the station cloak-room.

Walking about the streets to wile away the time until ten o'clock, we met S. and G. carrying their luggage. "Hullo, what the——! It 's all right, boys; be at the place at ten."

We were there at half-past nine. We were still there at eleven. Nobody came. Several times I made the round of the café, even though we sat close to the only entrance and could not miss them if they came. At half-past eleven we left, but returned in twenty minutes. Then we gave up hope.

CHAPTER XVI

FROM BERLIN TO HALTERN

THE night was bitterly cold. The extraordinarily mild weather of the last weeks had changed at the most inopportune moment. A few hard flakes of snow were now and again driven into our faces by a searching wind. We were without shelter, without food for the walking part of our enterprise, without adequate clothes. In Wallace's case a year and a half, in mine seven months, of prison life had not improved the condition of our health. We were decidedly too soft to stand a number of days of cold weather without at least some fatty nourishment.

I pictured us sleeping in ordinary townish winter clothes on a freezing day, perhaps with snow on the ground, in thin sleeping-bags consisting of an outer cover of canvas and a light lining of shoddy. We should be wet through in half an hour. The moisture would freeze on our garments as the generation of body heat, already at a low ebb for want of food, decreased. Then, we would go to sleep.

I imagined us trying to slip through between two sentries, five hundred yards apart, with patrols in between, and over bare fields, while the snow-light gave tolerable vision up to a mile.

I was so disheartened that I proposed that we should walk to the prison and give ourselves up. We could plead that we had gone away for a lark. Our punishment would almost certainly be light. There had been precedents which warranted this view. It was not impossible that the German authorities might come to the conclusion that one escape apiece had been enough for us. In this way we might get another chance under more favorable circumstances. If we persisted now, we had not one in ten thousand, and we firmly believed that after capture we should be sent to a penitentiary prison and guarded beyond hope of another attempt.

With splendid pluck and determination Wallace talked me round. No, he was not going to do anything of the sort. Let them catch him, if they could, but no voluntary surrender for him. I could do as I liked, but we might find it easier than we thought.

"All right! Let 's go to a hotel!"

"That is n't safe. We must try to get somewhere else."

I intended to have my way now. "No fear!

From what S. told us, it is safe enough. We both speak German pretty well. If we leave the place before eight o'clock we 'll be all right. Look at C. and G.! They never had to show their passports at the hotels. This way to the station for our luggage! Say, do you know a small hotel hereabouts?"

"Yes, there is the ——. I stopped there once. But it is a good long way from here."

"Let 's try it, anyway."

I had pocketed the luggage-ticket. At the station I could not find it. An agitated search through my pockets failed to reveal the square thin paper. We were standing in front of the cloak-room, and I was still hunting through my pockets when a man approached us.

I had caught sight of him out of the corner of my eye while he was still some yards away. If ever there was a detective in plain clothes, he was one. Deliberately I half turned my back toward him. He stepped up close to my shoulder and peered over it, listening to what we were saying. I dared not take any notice. Wallace's eyes, boring for a moment into mine while he lolled against a counter, are still clear before me.

A few months earlier I had received an answer to one of our petitions, in a fine official

envelop with a huge blue seal on the back. With an indefinite idea that the seal might be used as an effective camouflage, I had kept the envelop by me. I drew out my pocket-book, and while searching through it, held the back of the envelop conveniently exposed to the eyes of the detective.

"I must have left it at the hotel. Let 's go there and send for the luggage," I said aloud in German. The detective turned away. So did we.

A single cab stood in front of the station. I turned toward the station police-office to get the brass disk, but was met half-way by the policeman, who had been watching us. He handed it to me without a word.

The hotel at which we wished to stay was full. After some palaver cabby took us to one near by, where we got a room. It was a very small place. The night-porter seemed to be the only servant on duty. He appeared somewhat suspicious, but said nothing about it.

The double-bedded room we were shown into looked very nice. We thought it ridiculously luxurious, but Wallace went to bed at once. It was about one o'clock. While undressing I found the luggage-ticket in an inner waistcoat pocket.

I had still about two hours' work ahead of me, for I had to map out the route for the following day. I was quite convinced that Berlin was too hot for us. We had not yet discussed our further plans, but had bought a time-table at the station.

Finally, having considered a number of alternative routes, I selected a slow train, which was to leave the Zoölogical Garden Station, where our luggage was, at 10:24 A.M. for Hanover, and was due to arrive some time after 6 P.M. I went to sleep, dead tired, at about 2:45.

We got our knock and hot water at 6:30, as ordered. Having dressed, we went into the breakfast-room. A nice, comfortable-looking body presided there; I believe she was the proprietress. We had foreseen the formality of the visitors' book, and had our names and addresses pat. The landlady peered at them, then at us. I had to negotiate with her for our breakfast, for we had no bread-cards and wanted something to eat.

"You are foreigners, are n't you?" she asked.

"Good gracious, no! Why do you think so?"

"I thought so from your accent."

"We 're not from this part of Germany, as you can see by the visitors' book." I was going

to add that we had lived a long time abroad, etc., but, if I recollect rightly, I did not. I don't believe it safe to volunteer information, unless one is telling the truth.

"That 's quite all right, then. We have to be so careful about strangers! Just sign these emergency slips for your bread-cards. Thank you, sir."

During a very sketchy breakfast consisting of coffee, rolls, and butter, a young lieutenant passed down the room, and with a bright smile saluted us civilly. Wallace and I looked at each other, grinning covertly. What a lark! If he knew!

At a quarter to eight we left the hotel and slowly made our way toward the station. Having plenty of time, we entered a café to have a chat and another breakfast, even more sketchy than the first. We were the only guests in the place, and had to wait for the milk. Here I outlined my plans for the day. At last Wallace assented.

"Come along, then," I said, rising. "Let 's see what we can buy in the way of food. Chocolate first."

In a high-class confectioner's we were told that chocolate was out of the question, but *chocolates* we could have.

"What price?"

"Nine marks [$1.75] a pound!"

We could not afford more than two pounds, because the things we had bought the night before had made a big hole in our joint capital of $125.00—in German money, of course. Next we obtained two small tins of sardines at $1.10 each. Our efforts to buy something in the way of meat or fat were not crowned with success.

At the station, however, things went well, in spite of my extreme agitation when buying the tickets.

Within the first half-hour we passed Ruhleben camp, and had a glimpse of the grand stands, the barracks, and the enclosure, which we knew so intimately from the inside.

At about 12:30 the train stopped for over an hour at Stendal. The station restaurant supplied us with a fairly ample fish meal, beer, and coffee. Another long stop occurred later on.

During the journey we passed a considerable number of prisoners' camps. They seemed as a rule to be situated close to a railway line, within easy distance from a small station. The aspect of the huddled hutments, the wire fences around them with watch-towers at the corners, and the sentries on guard, was indescribably forlorn. At one station at which we stopped a transport

of Russian prisoners entrained under a guard of ancient territorials.

Wallace was in high spirits all the time. I was, on the contrary, moody, irritable, and worried. My feelings were in complete accord with the weather.

A lowering gray wrack of clouds was being torn and driven by a whistling wind above the naked fields and copses. Occasionally showers of hard snowflakes could be heard rattling on the glass of the carriage windows. Our compartment was over-heated, as trains always are in Germany. Yet, I shivered occasionally, as I looked out of the window, while trying to construct a small optimistic raft to cling to in a sea of despondency. I made a bad companion that journey.

Hanover was reached on time, and the luggage temporarily disposed of in the cloak-room. The town greeted us with a brief but thick blizzard—about the worst thing that could happen to us short of arrest. Confronted with it, my spirits improved.

"Snow, or no snow, we 'll make the best attempt we can at the frontier," I whispered.

"Just what I think," Wallace agreed heartily.

His boots did not fit him well, and I urged him to buy bigger ones. A suitable pair, shown to

us in a shop, cost $15.00, too much for our declining purse. When Wallace looked up at me from his chair, mutely shaking his head, I could not insist on the expenditure.

After that we walked about the streets, looking for a likely hotel. We decided on a dirty fifth-rate one, to which we resolved to return later, and then wandered back to the brighter, fashionable part of the town. We had dinner in a big restaurant. The warmth, the lights, the show of gaiety around us, and an ample but meatless meal accompanied by a glass or two of decent lager, made me feel subduedly optimistic. Wallace was nearly jumping out of his skin with *joie de vivre*.

At ten o'clock we went to our hotel. It was unnecessarily low-class. We did not seem to fit into the scheme of things there, and consequently were regarded with half-concealed suspicion. Nevertheless, no questions were asked. Our room was cheerless and cold. We waited until our luggage was brought; then Wallace crept into bed, while I sat in my overcoat near the guttering candle, looking up trains.

I intended to get to Haltern the following evening. The main railway lines lay across our route, and several changes were necessary, there being no direct trains over the branch lines we

had to use. My task proved a difficult one. Few trains were running in Germany at that time. The fast corridor expresses, which we could have taken over comparatively small stretches, had to be carefully avoided, for we knew now of the existence of passport controls on them. The slow trains did not usually connect. After much comparing, testing, and retesting, I was fairly satisfied at last.

I had resolved not to leave Hanover from the main station. Detectives might be watching for us there. By using electric trams we could get to Hainholz, a village near Hanover, and there pick up our train. At about 12:30 we should be at Minden. A two-hours' wait there, and a journey of about one and a half hours would take us to Osnabruck by about 5 P.M. Forty minutes later a non-corridor express would carry us to Haltern, where we should arrive at 7:30.

I was nearly beat when I tumbled into bed at two o'clock, envying Wallace, whose regular breathing had filled the room for hours past.

Bang, bang, bang! bang, bang, bang!

"All ri—" I began.

"*Danke schön, danke!* [Thank you]," shrieked Wallace, to drown my voice.

I opened my eyes foolishly, to a dark room. A match spluttered, the wick caught, and Wallace's eyes glittered reproachfully into mine from behind his glasses. "I say, do you know what you said?" This in German.

"Well, I—"

"Shshsh, you chump, *Deutsch!*"

"We 'd like breakfast, please!" This to a youth in the bar-room.

"Have you got your bread-cards?"

"No. We 're travelers; we 'll sign travelers' slips."

"Nothing doing. You can have a cup of coffee."

"Look here, we got bread at a restaurant last night without them. Why can't you give us some?"

At this suggestion the uncivil youth lost his temper completely, and we were fain to content ourselves with a cup of German coffee-substitute.

Before eight o'clock we were out of the place. Our luggage was again in the cloak-room of the main station. A long walk got rid of most of the time before us. At ten we tried to buy some nuts. The oil they contained would sup-

ply our bodies with fuel; but none were to be had.

Having got our luggage, we took a tram to Hainholz, where we arrived far too early. The cloak-room and ticket-office of the small station were closed. Some minutes after eleven the train left. It was a pleasant change to get into the hot carriage after the cold station.

At 12:30 we arrived at Minden. The huge dark waiting-room seemed full of intangible menaces. We spent an exceedingly uncomfortable time there, but were recompensed by an excellent meal. A considerable piece of veal, with plenty of vegetables, blunted our fears and appeased our ravenous hunger.

At the station where next we had to change we found our train waiting on a siding, and at 7:30 P.M. we arrived in Haltern.

The weather had been much the same as on the preceding day, a little colder, a little more snow. With the prospect of getting within walking-distance of Holland, my spirits were not so depressed. It is such a bonny feeling to get on "your own feet," instead of having to wait in a railway carriage or station, expecting to feel a hand on your shoulder, and hear a voice asking you for your papers!

CHAPTER XVII

WESTWARD HO!

UNTIL we got out into the open country I was to walk in front, carrying the portmanteau, which was a little too bulky a load for a man of smaller stature than mine. Wallace was to follow twenty or thirty paces in the rear, but not to lose sight of me.

Into the town and the market-place it was plain sailing. Without looking at the sign "To Wesel," the existence of which I had forgotten, I turned into the right lane, recognizing it from its general aspect. Nevertheless, the darkness made the ground which I had traversed in daylight look different.

At the cross-roads a long procession of street lamps disappeared down the street which ought to have been the right one. On my first escape I had failed to notice these standards on what then looked like a country road. They are not very conspicuous in daylight. I had had my eyes fixed upon the landscape generally, rather than upon details close to me, which had no

meaning for me at that time. Furthermore, I had very soon taken a path on the left.

For the moment I was confused, and, not being able to take bearings in the dark, I walked ahead, up a lane, pondering the situation. Here were no lights, which was inviting. A woman passed me, and a moment after Wallace closed up rapidly.

"Did you see that woman?" he asked. "She turned and looked after you. She 'll inform the police. We 've got to get off the road!"

"All right! It 's dark enough for anything. There is no danger. Just let 's get off the road and see whether anything happens."

We waited some time, but nothing occurred. Nothing could, as a matter of fact, for we did n't wait long enough.

"I can't recognize this road," I complained. "The darkness makes everything look different. We 're too far east. That road with the lamps along it is the right one, after all."

"You 're absolutely wrong," came the quite unexpected opposition from Wallace. "We 're too far west."

I had only been soliloquizing aloud, to give Wallace a chance of understanding every step we took.

"How can you know that?"

"I saw a sign, farther back, 'To Wesel.' That means we are too far west."

"Are you sure you saw the sign, and did we pass along the road in its direction?"

"Absolutely certain!"

"I can't understand it at all. We simply can't be too far west!" Wallace had seen the sign in the market-place. This being the starting-point, his conclusion was not warranted. But he could not know that. I, on the other hand, was sufficiently doubtful on account of the lamp standards, and Wallace's opposition turned the scales.

"All right," I conceded ungraciously, for I am rather touchy about my woodcraft, "if you 're so sure of it, we 'll walk straight north. In that way we 'll come across the road we are looking for, if you 're right. If not, we can turn back. Now we 'll find a place to pack our knapsacks and get rid of this beastly bag."

We left the road definitely now, close to a church which stood dark and lonely among open fields. We were still near Haltern, but the night increased the distances.

A drop of rain struck my face. Delighted, I turned to Wallace, who was behind me: "I say, I believe it 's coming on to rain. It would be fine if the weather got mild again!"

Behind a wall, which enclosed a churchyard, we stopped to get ready for the road. We packed our knapsacks as best we could in complete darkness, for our only flash-lamp refused to act. While we were doing so, it really began to rain, and we slipped into our oilsilks. Then we started out across-country, due north, walking by compass.

The going was terrible. The ground was frozen hard and the rain on coming in contact with it congealed to ice, which caused us to slip and stumble on the unyielding ridges between the furrows, and now and again to come down hard. The exertion kept us warm. When I took off my hat for a moment, to wipe my forehead, I found the brim full of solid ice.

We proceeded for about half an hour, uphill all the time. Then the edge of a wood stopped us. That decided me: I knew now that we were following the wrong course.

"Look here, Wace, there 's not a shadow of a doubt in my mind that we are too far east. Haltern is bearing south. If we were anywhere near the right road, it ought to lie in a south-easterly direction. If we had been too far west, we should have come to the woods much sooner. We can make one very decisive test. We 'll go east, until the eastern extremity of

Haltern bears south. Then we shall know that we are too far to the east!"

We altered our course accordingly and proceeded in this new direction. Suddenly the ground disappeared from underneath my feet, and I fell headlong down the banks of a deep, hollow road. Wallace was saved by being last. Up the other side and across more fields we came to another road. Here we almost ran into a man, whom our sudden appearance frightened out of his wits, to judge by the way he hurried off toward the town.

"Now, then, Haltern bears almost southwest now. Back we go to the cross-roads. Southeast will take us there in a straight line. Come along."

On the way back I noticed for the first time a change in my companion. His steps, all of a sudden, seemed to have lost their elasticity, while I grew stronger and more contented every minute.

"What 's the matter with you?" I asked.

"Nothing."

"Of course there is. I know it from the way you walk!"

"I don't feel extra well. Something wrong with my stomach. It 'll pass soon, I expect."

That was bad news. We came to a lonely

wooden hut, like a very small barn. I stopped. "Tell me frankly if you think you can't go on. In that case we 'll break in here. We 'll have a certain amount of shelter inside. There is no danger. To-morrow will be Sunday and nobody is likely to come near us. It is much better to stop in time, before you have drawn too much upon your reserve strength. The situation is not precarious enough for that. You 'll want that later on."

"No," he insisted; "I can go on."

At last we turned into the road we were looking for. The rain had changed to sleet. The road was slippery with ice. Progress would have been slow under any circumstances, but it was slower on account of Wallace's failing strength. He was plucky, however, and he kept going.

The usual thirst began to trouble us. Fortunately we had filled our water-bottles at the hotel in Hanover. To husband our supply on Wallace's behalf, I contented myself with sucking the ice which I peeled in lumps from my hat brim.

In due course we came to the first clearing. The outlines of a barn on the right, and a house on the left, seemed familiar. "Let 's rest a bit," I proposed to Wallace, for he seemed al-

most done. He propped himself in a sitting posture against the wall of the barn, while I scouted around.

There was a farmyard behind the structure. The barn itself consisted of a loft, reared on strong uprights. Only half the space below was enclosed by boards, and filled with compressed straw. The other half was open, and contained a big farm wagon. Between its wheels and the straw a number of clumsy ladders were tightly wedged. In the gable of the loft an open door showed a black interior.

"There will be straw up there," I said to Wallace. "The cattle were given a fresh bed to-day, probably. Nobody will want to fetch straw on a Sunday. We 'll be quite safe." And I went through the same argument as before.

Wallace was undecided for a moment, I believe. But, to tell the truth, I had spoken rather too sharply to him a little time before. My only excuse is that I was exceedingly worried. Rotten as he felt, he was bound to be nettled. "No," he said; "I will go on."

It was obvious that he was suffering from an attack of something akin to indigestion. I was unable, though, to make head or tail of his attack. When I pressed him for information,

he told me he had swallowed some shaving-soap, mistaking it in the dark for chocolate. He had hardly any pain, but our pace decreased gradually to a crawl as we neared the crest of the spur of hills, where the path which I had used on my first escape branched off. Not having a torch, I missed it, but discovered my mistake about two hundred yards beyond. We had come out of the forest. Plowed fields on our right had given me the first hint of my error.

"We 'll have to turn back. I 've missed the path," I informed my friend.

"I can't move any farther. I must lie down," answered Wallace indistinctly, swaying on his feet.

Too miserable to say anything, I led him back, and some way into the timber got out his flimsy sleeping-bag, and put him inside. Then I felt his pulse. It was going at the rate of about one hundred and thirty a minute.

"How do you feel?" I asked.

"Done for, old man. But don't you worry. You go on. No use spoiling your chance. You leave me here. I 'll be all right."

"I 'm not going to leave you, except for a few minutes. I want to find that path. I 'll be back in a quarter of an hour. You 'll be all right that long, won't you?"

I was still hoping for a miraculous recovery, although Wallace's rapid pulse had upset me sorely. My mind was tenaciously holding to the idea of "carrying on," and I wished to know how to get my companion on the right road without wasting his precious strength.

It took me less than ten minutes to find the path. The groping about in the darkness of the wood had taken my mind off the real issue. Now, on my way back, I had to face the ugly situation we were in.

I had not enough medical knowledge to gage the insignificance of the accelerated heart action, and thus almost feared the worst. If only he could be sick! Perhaps he was going to die on my hands! If he lived through the night, could I hope that his strength would return to him on the morrow and allow us to proceed?

One thing was out of the question: I could not leave him alone, even if he was out of danger and in shelter, for we were both fully persuaded that, in the event of capture, we should be sent to a penal prison. But what was to be done? Wallace could not lie out in the cold the rest of the night and all the next day. The only shelter reasonably near was the barn, which we had passed some time before. We

should have to go back to it. We had to reach it, even if I had to carry him.

The snow, which had come on again, was whispering in the trees when I entered among them, groping in the thick darkness for his recumbent form. It sifted straight down through the still air, while the wind shrieked and roared overhead. He called feebly when I came close to him in my blind search.

"Well, how goes it?" I inquired, with seeming cheerfulness.

"I think I 'm better." This through chattering teeth. "But I 'm aw–aw–awfully cold."

"Get up. I 'll help you."

"I–I–I don't want to."

"But you can't stay here," I protested. "You 'd be frozen stiff before morning. We 've got to get back to that barn we passed."

"A–a–are n't you going to lie down, too? We might keep each other warm."

"No, I 'm not," very emphatically. "Get up, d 'you hear, get up!"

Partly by sheer force I got him out of the thing we had bought for a sleeping-bag. Already the wet had penetrated in places. While Wallace stood leaning against a tree, I groped round for our knapsacks.

Carrying the double burden, which privilege cost me another struggle with Wallace, I led back over the ground which we had covered on our way up, my friend lurching drunkenly by my side. Then he fell and lay in a faint, but recovered quickly. After I had got him on his feet again, I kept his arm, supporting him as much as I could. Every few hundred steps or so he half collapsed, his knees doubling under him. When this happened I let him slide to the ground, thus to get some rest.

I do not know how often this had occurred when I noticed something wrong about the road. The clearing on the left, with stumps standing black against white snow patches—surely I could not have twice missed noticing it! The ground, too, fell rather sharply. "Traveling toward the Wesel road!" I thought. "I remember no villages there, if I recollect the map."

Wallace had been sitting on the ground all this time. I helped him to his feet and urged him on: "We 've got to be traveling! Up hill now! Awfully sorry, old chap, but I missed the road."

Three rests, and the old track was under our feet. Three more, and we were drawing near to the little settlement.

"It 'll not be very long now, old man; cheer up!" I said encouragingly.

"Mus' get into warmth. Knock first house come to. Can't stick it," Wallace muttered in reply.

"Try to make that barn, won't you? It 's close by."

We came abreast of a house with a light in the passage, which showed dimly through some panes of glass above the front door. The time must have been about 2:30 A.M.

Wallace stopped and peered at it. "Is that a house?"

"Yes."

"Knock!" and with a contented sigh he slid to the ground.

I was not prepared to give up so soon. That is what his command meant, as it appeared to me. My pal moved and struggled into a sitting position.

"Knock!" he repeated.

I knocked. No answer. I knocked again, but less determined. The same result. The third time my knuckles met the wood with a nice regard for the sleepers inside. I did not intend them to hear me; it was only for Wallace's satisfaction that I went through this performance.

"They don't hear," I announced, having gone back to my companion. "Come on, make another effort. Let 's get to the barn. It 's only a few more steps," I urged.

"Did you knock?" he asked suspiciously.

"Yes, three times!" I replied, with veracious if somewhat misleading detail, and I dragged him up and on.

At last we reached it. Wallace was soon resting in the same place as he did hours before, while I went to get a ladder. Three of them were wedged in on one side between a wheel of the wagon and a support of the barn, and by the compressed straw on the other. I tore, and heaved, and struggled with berserk rage until I got one out, the sweat pouring from underneath my hat brim. It was an enormously clumsy affair, and trying to rear it against the barn and into the door opening off the loft, I failed again and again by an inch or two. After a brief rest I went at it again. The last inch seemed unattainable. Another effort! Suddenly it leaped right up and into position. Turning in surprise, I saw my friend standing behind me. His little strength had been added to mine just as the right moment.

"I 'll go up first and have a look!" I told him. The rear of the loft was four feet deep in clean-

smelling straw. Thank God for that! We should be warm!

"Up you go!" I was on the ground again to help Wallace up the ladder. He managed to ascend it, and then pitched forward. I let him lie and fetched our knapsacks. The ladder I left in position for the time being. If a few hours' rest would improve my friend to such an extent that it became feasible to "carry on" during the following night, I intended to drag it up after us, and hide it at the rear of the barn, where I proposed to conceal ourselves. It would not be missed on a Sunday.

A hearty heave and shove sent Wallace sprawling on the straw. Soon I had a hollow dug for him, into which he crawled, and I covered him as best I could. Then I flung myself down by his side, too fagged to care for overcoat or covering.

Fighting against the drowsiness which immediately stole over me, I must have fallen asleep for a short spell, for I felt suddenly very cold. Too tired to move immediately, I lay shivering, listening to the dying wind and the faint beating of snow against the thin walls and the roof of our shelter. When the cold became intolerable, I crawled with stiff joints into the corner where I had flung our knapsacks, got my overcoat out,

and put it on. The exercise cleared my dulled brain, and I perceived that I had better look after Wallace. His teeth were chattering when I bent over him. As well as I could, I got him warmer after a time. I now kept wide awake, trying to piece together what was left of our hopes.

I did not anticipate hearing any one stirring in the few houses around until late daylight, and dully wondered at the sound of voices which penetrated to our hiding-place, hours before some chinks in the roof showed faintly gray. We could not see the door from where we rested.

With an effort I turned to Wallace. "Are you awake?"

"Yes."

"Do you feel you 've got to get into warmth?"

"Yes."

"That means going to a farm and meeting people!"

"Yes."

Poor Wallace! His voice sounded so flat and tired! I have often wondered since whether I ought not to have made another effort to keep him where he was, and to proceed with him the next night. He might have stood it. I don't think he quite realized what it meant getting into shelter. I believed at the time that he did.

However, I acted according to my lights, without another word.

Sliding from the straw I approached the door, to stop in wonder for a moment before going down the ladder. Long icicles had grown from the upper edge of the opening almost to the floor of the loft in the few hours we had been inside, and between them the cold light of a winter morning, strongly reflected by a white, unbroken surface, met my eyes. It was eight o'clock by my watch. The icicles snapped with a glassy sound and fell noiselessly outside when I broke through their curtain.

Beyond it the world was white,—the ground, as far as I could see it; the air, thick with dancing flakes; and the sky. What mattered it now whether we stayed in the loft or sought the shelter of a farm?

CHAPTER XVIII

THE GAME IS UP

THE farmhouse door was opened by a girl of about sixteen, who turned back into the kitchen to call her mother, a woman whom incessant toil seemed to have aged beyond her years.

"May I speak to your husband?" I asked politely.

"He 's not at home."

"Do you expect him soon?"

"No; he 's away,"—hesitating—"at Haltern."

"Well, it 's this way. I am with a friend. We came from Bremen yesterday, and we 're on our way to Cologne for a holiday. We 've relatives living at Klein Recken, and thought of spending a few days with them. We tried to walk there last night from Haltern, but in the awful weather we lost the road. My friend fell ill, too. Fortunately, we found your barn, and slept in the straw. We 'll pay, of course, for what damage we did. But the question is this: Can you put us up for a day or two, until my

friend gets really better? We 'll pay you well, if you would."

"You can't stay here that long, but you may come into the kitchen and warm yourself. You may stay until twelve o'clock."

I reflected. A few hours' grace! We had better take it and see how things turned out.

"All right," I said. "I 'll fetch my friend and our knapsacks."

With the assistance of the son of the house, a strong lad about fifteen years of age, I got Wallace into the kitchen. We were given seats in front of the roaring kitchener. My friend seemed much better.

Our arrival was obviously an extraordinary event, as well it might be; but if the people did conjecture at all, they showed it only in a suppressed kind of excitement. There was no atmosphere of suspicion, and the few curious questions the woman asked us were easily parried.

There were three girls and the boy in the family, all approaching maturity. While the woman bustled about preparing a breakfast for us, two of the girls and the boy made ready to go out. I did not like that, and tried to find out where they were going.

"You 're going to church, I suppose?" This to the eldest girl.

"Yes," shyly.

"Have you got one near by?"

"No. We go to Haltern to church. My sister will be back soon from the first service." So there was a fourth girl!

"Did she go to Haltern, too?"

"Yes."

"It seems a long way to walk on a day like this."

Silence.

"You do get up early, even on Sundays, don't you? I thought I heard you about very early, this morning."

"We get up at five o'clock," broke in the old woman.

"You don't say so. I always thought there was little farm work to be done in winter. You don't seem to take advantage of your slack time."

"There 's lots to do." And she ran through a list of duties.

"Do you feel the war as much as we do in town? How are you off for food?"

"We manage all right."

"Well, we don't. We 're chemists in an ammunition factory, and we 're worked to death and don't get much to eat. There 's nothing one can buy. We applied for a holiday, being

tired of the everlasting long hours, and got three weeks. A bit too late for Muller, here. He ought n't to have come, feeling as he did."

The coffee was brewed, and bread, butter, and a plate of cut sausage were on the table. Both of us went at it cheerfully. In the middle of the meal the fourth girl, the eldest, came in, and the boy and his two sisters left. This was about half-past nine.

When I had an opportunity, I whispered to Wallace: "We 've got to get away from here soon after eleven. Play up." Then I addressed him aloud: "What do you think we 'd better do?"

"I hardly know. I feel pretty rotten still."

Turning to the woman, I asked: "It 's about two and a half hours to Klein Recken, is n't it?"

"About that."

"Do you think you can manage that, Muller?" I looked seriously at Wallace, who understood and answered, equally serious:

"No; I 'm afraid it would be too much for me."

"Well, then, we had better go back to Haltern and on to Cologne from there. Let me see what train we can catch." Luckily we had kept our time-table. It came in handy now.

"There 's a train at eleven-fifty-four to

Cologne. We might catch that, don't you think?"

"Anything you like, Erhardt."

"Right-o." To the woman: "How long do you reckon to the station in Haltern from here?"

"You can do it in a little over three quarters of an hour."

"That 's what I make it. We 'll leave here at eleven."

A dollar and a quarter seemed to satisfy the old woman. Indeed, she obviously had not expected so much, but she quickly hid the money in her purse. Then we took our leave.

The weather had cleared somewhat. It was freezing slightly. The clouds were thinning here and there, and an occasional ray of sunshine drifted over the landscape. It was a regular Christmas picture. Two or three inches of snow covered the ground, reflecting strongly the dispersed light from the sky. Black and sharply defined, the woods were outlined against it or the unblemished white of the fields, where they stretched up the hillsides behind them. Each branch had a ridge of snow on its upper surface, and looked as if it had been drawn with India ink and a sharp-pointed pen on glazed pa-

per. The boughs of the dark-green pines were bending under masses of downy white, lumps of which slid to the ground as we passed. Then the boughs, relieved from part of their load, swayed upward.

"You see why I wanted to be off," I explained to Wallace as soon as we were out of earshot, glad to drop back into English, since nobody was about. "Our unexpected appearance at the farm was sufficiently extraordinary to make the girls serve it up hot and strong to their friends in Haltern. It 'll fly round the town like bazaar talk, and we 'd have had the police coming for us in a couple of shakes. But what now?"

We talked it over. Again Wallace asked me to leave him, but my stern answer silenced his arguments. Again it was he who urged "carrying on," although he admitted that to walk any distance was out of the question for him. He submitted a plan which did not strike me as particularly hopeful, but it was the best we could do under the circumstances.

We were to go back to a certain town in Germany, get help there, and rest in security until Wallace's condition and the weather had improved sufficiently to make another attempt feasible.

Our exchequer was at low water, and I had my doubts whether we could reach the town. But we might try.

Sundry groups of people were coming from Haltern; some of them stared rather hard at us. Wallace was improving, and enjoyed the walk, but he seemed very weak, and his feet hurt him so that he limped painfully along.

The weather changed again for the worse, and as we approached the station it began to snow. I took tickets to a junction not far off. During the twenty minutes until the train was due we intended to wait on the platform.

"Why don't you wait in the waiting-room? It 's beastly on the platform," said the ticket-collector.

"Might as well," I said indifferently, and turned back.

We took our seats and ordered coffee. At the counter opposite us stood a young lieutenant in the long green, peace frock-coat of a rifleman. We saw the ticket-collector come in and address him, whereupon the lieutenant walked straight up to us.

"Where do you come from?"

"We walked in from Klein Recken this morning," I answered.

"Show me your papers!"

I smiled and addressed Wallace in English: "Game 's up, old man!" He nodded glumly. The lieutenant stared. Then I explained.

The officer did not seem very much surprised, and the miraculous way in which an armed soldier appeared at his elbow showed that he had been expecting a dénouement.

"I 'll have to send you to the guard-room at present," he said. "Don't try any tricks. My men are hellishly sharp." I reflected á moment. Escape was out of the question for the present. Wallace's condition, the tracks we should leave in the snow, etc., would make an attempt absurd.

"I don't know whether you will accept our word that we sha'n't run away while in your charge. We 'll give it, if you like. That 's right, Wace, is n't it?" I turned to my friend with the last words. Wallace nodded.

The lieutenant had been in the act of turning away, but wheeled sharply when I had spoken. Looking us over carefully, he said: "Right, I will. Are you hungry?"

"We could do with something to eat," Wallace spoke up for the first time. The officer turned to his soldier:

"You will take these men to the guard-room. Leave your rifle here. They are to have double rations of whatever you get."

"Besten Dank, Herr Leutnant!" we acknowledged.

With a salute we turned and followed the soldier across the railway lines to the guard-room. It was in a wooden hut, and similar to all other guard-rooms. We had a wash and made ourselves as presentable as possible. Wallace shaved. I was still wearing a beard.

About five o'clock the lieutenant came over to search us. Warning us to give up everything of importance, he merely asked us to hand him what we had in our pockets, and glanced through our knapsacks.

At six o'clock we were taken to his office in the station building, escorted by two armed soldiers.

"You gave me your word that you were not going to make another attempt!" the lieutenant reminded us.

"Yes, sir, as long as we are in your charge, or that of your men."

"Good. I shall have to send you to prison now. I can't keep you in the guard-room. Don't let the warder search you. I've done that. You are military prisoners, not under

civil authority. If you prefer it, try to make him give you a cell where you can be together. Tell him I said you were to have one. You 'll be here for a few days before an escort can be got for you. Good-by."

He called our escort in while we stood outside, nobody, seemingly, heeding us in the least. When he had finished with the two soldiers, we marched off. They were particularly nice chaps from the Rhine, not proper Prussians, and largely influenced by socialistic ideas. They twitted us good-humoredly about having been caught. Laughing and joking, we arrived at our destination.

The old prison building in a narrow side street near the market-place looked particularly uninviting. After much ringing of the bell and, at last, thumping with the butt end of a rifle, the door opened, and we were confronted by a large, flabby-looking man in uniform, with the placid, unlined face of a person whose life had flowed past him like a pleasant, quiet stream. He was something between a policeman and a warder, as it appeared. At the moment he was smoking a long pipe with a porcelain bowl.

Our arrival agitated him as much as his natural phlegm and his military training would

permit. For a time he seemed undecided what to do, and repeated over and over again every one of his sentences. This was a trick of his, which amused us considerably during the days we were under his care, but made conversation slow and unprofitable. As he collected his wits, he became more official.

"So, two Englishmen, are they? They are two Englishman, they are. You 've brought two Englishmen. Well, well, well! Where are their papers? Have you got their papers? You must give me their papers. They are not quite in order; no, no; they are not in order; no, they are not in order."

The soldiers explained patiently that they were.

"Well, well, well! Do they speak German? They speak German, I hope." To us: "Do you speak German?

"Well, well, I must search you, my men. I must search you, I must; I must search you."

"Hold on," said one of our escort, "the lieutenant says they are not to be searched. The lieutenant saw to that. And you 've got to do the best you can for them, and you are to put them in a cell together. Orders from the lieutenant!"

"Well, I must search them," repeated the warder helplessly. "I must search them, you know; prison rules, you know. I must search them for concealed weapons!"

"Nothing of the sort. They were searched, and we 've got orders to see that you don't bother them again."

"Have you any knives, pistols, revolvers, or other weapons on you?" Stubbornly the warder had turned to us. The habit of years is not so easily discarded.

"Oh, let 's give him our pocket-knives, Wace, and get it over," I said, half laughing, half annoyed.

"Come into this room; come in here; come into this room. Now I 'll enter the articles in this book; yes, I 'll enter them in this book." He began to write, speaking the words aloud: "No 000000, one ivory-handled pocketknife. No. 000001, one horn-handled pocketknife. . . . Now, I 'll give them back to you when you leave, you see; I 'll give them back to you when you leave; yes, I 'll give them back to you."

"Yes, but we want to get back ourselves," said one of the soldiers. "Hurry up and show us their cell. We are to have a look at it, the lieutenant said."

"All right, all right, all right! I 've got a single cell will do for the two of them; a single cell for the two; yes, for the two."

At last we were in the cell, which was of course as dark as the nether regions, having taken quite an affectionate farewell of our escort.

PART III

CHAPTER XIX

FOOTING THE BILL

THE lieutenant at the station, by his orders to us and the soldiers, had given us the cue for our behavior. Obviously, we must try to impress the warder with our standing as "military prisoners," in order to be as comfortable as circumstances permitted.

We proceeded to do this with great ingenuousness. Long arguments and counter-arguments secured us the use of an oil lamp until eight o'clock at night. We went in force to obtain a second blanket, the warder leading the procession.

Our cell was very small, and very dirty. What little space there ought to have been was taken up by stacks of old bicycle tires, which had been confiscated six months before by the Government to relieve the rubber famine in the army.

During the three days we spent in Haltern prison we had no exercise at all. When the weather changed on the second day, and became

mild again, just about the time when we should have been close to the frontier if everything had gone well, we sulked with fate more than ever.

The reported arrival of our escort on the evening of the third day excited the warder to such an extent that he wanted us to get up at half-past five the next morning in order to catch a train about eight o'clock. We demurred, of course, and got our way, as usual. Ever since our arrest we had devoted a good deal of time to weighing the probability of being sent to a certain penal prison in Berlin.

"Where are you going to take us?" Wallace and I blurted out simultaneously at two shadowy soldiers in the dark passage of the prison the following morning.

"To where you came from, the Stadtvogtei in Berlin," one of them replied. To say we felt relieved is putting it mildly.

"We 'd better not take it for granted that we are going to stay there, though!" I said, as we tramped through the melting slush to the station.

Several hours later, after a change of trains, Wallace and I had been put temporarily into a compartment with other travelers, until it could be cleared for the exclusive use of ourselves and

escort. Slipping into the only two empty seats, we found the burning interest of our fellow-travelers centered upon a man in the naval uniform of the Zeppelin service, who was holding forth about his adventures over England. With extraordinary frankness he was recounting the names of a number of air-ship stations, and the number of Zeppelins usually detailed from each for attacks on Great Britain, and predicting another raid seven days later.

"You give them h—— every time you fly across, don't you?" asked a civilian, leaning far forward in his seat.

"Can't say that there is much to boast about of late," was the unexpected reply. "They 've plenty of guns, and can shoot quite as well as we. There won't be many more raids after the one coming off next week."

As we saw in the German newspapers eight days later the raid took place as predicted, and it was the last air-ship raid for a very long time.

To be in the company of a friend, and to have some money in my pocket, made all the difference between this and my first return from the neighborhood of the Dutch frontier eight months before. We did ourselves quite well on

the journey, trying to discount in this way the punishment awaiting us.

At ten o'clock that evening we were welcomed to the Stadtvogtei by several of our old N. C. O.'s with roars of laughter, and conducted to two adjoining criminal cells in "Block 14," a long way from our friends.

Before my eyes had become quite accustomed to the darkness, my cell door opened again, and our sergeant-major beckoned me to follow him.

"Take your things with you!" he said, and led the way to another cell, farther along the corridor, to separate me from Wallace.

"Come out here! I want to talk to you!" he ordered, when I had dumped down my luggage. "Who had the key?" he shot at me when I stood opposite him in the corridor.

We had expected this, and before our escape had rehearsed our answers to such questions in case one or more of us should be caught.

"Key? What key?" I asked.

"The key to the front door, of course!"

"I don't know anything about a key."

"How did you get out, then? How did you open the door?"

"We didn't open the door. We found it open. It seemed too good an opportunity, so we slipped out as we were. We weren't pre-

pared at all! But you ought to know all this as well as I do. Have n't you got your report from Haltern yet?''

His manner changed. He became quite paternal. He was n't a bad chap. Anyway, he knew he could n't screw anything out of us by turning rough. ''Now, come! Don't try to hoodwink me. We know well enough it was S. who had the key.''

''Well, if you know, why do you ask me?''

''Come on, tell me. It won't be to your disadvantage! quite the reverse. Just say it was S.''

But of course I did nothing of the sort, and he gave it up.

''We 'll give you a hard time of it, this journey,'' he threatened, rather mournfully. ''Nothing but the prison food for you, no light of an evening.

''I thought you had shaved off your beard,'' he remarked, before turning away. ''I notified the police accordingly within the hour of your escape. We had all the stations watched. However did you slip out of Berlin?''

''Oh, rather casually,'' I grinned. ''Good-night, Major!''

I felt by no means sprightly and unconcerned just then. I do not like solitary confinement.

The stretch in front of me bade fair to exceed in discomfort the first one I had had. Still, we were lucky to be in the Stadtvogtei, near our friends, where, apparently, we were going to stay. With this consolatory reflection I rolled myself into my blankets without undressing. The next day we were going to be de-loused.

S. was arrested in Berlin on the morning following our arrival in prison, and lodged in a cell next to Wallace's before we went into the yard for our exercise that afternoon. If I am not mistaken, a telephone conversation, during which he had made an appointment with a "friend," had been listened to. Instead of a friend, a detective met S.

He got the same punishment as we did. At the time of his escape a criminal action had been pending against him. A month after our solitary confinement had come to an end, he was taken to the court one morning by a policeman. A few hours later the policeman turned up alone, considerably the worse for drink, and shedding bitter tears. His charge had decamped through the rear window of a café where he had been treating his escort. We never saw him again. He was still at liberty in June, 1917, and apparently in Holland.

G. was never captured. For several months rumors reached us that he had been seen here or there in Germany. I have not heard that he has arrived in England.

The German with the English name went to see his mother one day, two months after his disappearance from prison. The police were watching her flat in Berlin, hoping for just that event. Their prey got a term of solitary confinement in our prison, and was then drafted back into the army.

The sixth man, the German stockbroker, followed S. by a few days only. He was kept in prison for a week, and then definitely set at liberty.

On the evening of our second day in cells, we were warned not to go to bed, as our examination was to take place at nine o'clock. A quarter before the hour, S., Wallace, and I were taken down to the ground floor and thoughtfully locked into one cell, so that we were able to make the final arrangements for a consistent and uncontradictory account. This we did after a thorough inspection of the place which convinced us that no trap had been laid for us, and that we could talk freely until we should hear the key in the lock.

The following morning we were told of the

comment of Herr Kriegsgerichtsrat Wolf of the Kommandantur, who conducted the examination, upon our respective stories: "Those Englishmen have told me a pack of lies!"

The threat of the sergeant-major had not been an empty one. We were forbidden to have any food apart from the prison rations. Every third day for four weeks these consisted only of bread and water, so far as we were concerned. The parcels arriving for us in the meantime—there were many of them, for Christmas was approaching—were handed to our friends for safekeeping. We were debarred from the use of artificial light in our cells. It being within a month from the shortest day in the year, this was rather "off." The dawn did not peep through the small windows before nine o'clock, and when we returned from the yard in the afternoon, it was again too dark to read. I think it took the authorities ten days to relent on the question of light. We then got the use of an oil lamp up to eight o'clock every night.

I feel quite sure that we had to thank the lieutenant for the extra punishment of criminal cells, prison food, and no light. He must have been badly rattled about our escaping, and his superiors may have been ungentle with him

when he reported it. Naturally, he took it out on us, though to our faces he was quite polite.

The question of food was solved to our complete satisfaction within three days. Our friends knew, of course, that we were going for our exercise every afternoon at three o'clock. From the very beginning they were able to pass us sandwiches and small cans of food.

Not without a little difficulty the N. C. O. in charge of our corridor had been persuaded that "they are allowed to have their newspapers, of course." His referring the question to higher authority had been discouraged. Why bother busy men with trifles? The newspaper man was one of us. He brought the papers round every morning, when the cell doors were opened for cleaning purposes, and also every afternoon. Frequently he did not exchange a word with us but simply pushed the papers into the blankets of our beds. After he had gone, sandwiches and a beer bottle full of hot tea seemed to have been hatched miraculously among our bedclothes.

The last and crowning achievement was the ventilator dodge. The ventilator was a square hole in the wall above the door, inclined toward the cell. Just after our dinner time, when the N. C. O. on duty was likely to be otherwise em-

ployed, stealthy footsteps might have been heard passing rapidly along the balcony. Very frequently they were inaudible even to our strained ears. The scraping of tin against stone was a signal for us to hurl ourselves toward the door, to catch the Lyle's syrup can, filled with hot meat and vegetables, or soup, which was sliding through the ventilator.

None of the N. C. O.'s knew about this. They marveled at our physical endurance, which permitted us to retain a flourishing appearance in the face of starvation. Sagely they counseled the taking of medicine, or soap for instance, to make us look weak and pale just before our "solitary" was to terminate. "It 'll never do to be seen with bulging cheeks and bursting seams by anybody in command."

The chance of seeing old friends, if only for a few seconds every day, the knowledge that I should have their companionship again as soon as our punishment was over, and the fact that I was in familiar surroundings, lessened the depressing effect of my solitary confinement this second time. Wallace, too, kept in fairly good spirits. Nevertheless, I came to the conclusion that the game was not worth the candle. I told

Wallace of my decision as soon as I could. When we were again in front of the gate I qualified it: "Never again, Wace, never again—except during the mild seasons, and when the chances are as good as I can make 'em."

On Christmas Eve, the thirty-fourth day of our punishment, we were liberated, but we had to sleep in the criminal cells for some time afterward.

In time, however, Wallace got the single cell he coveted, and I, after three weeks, again joined my old friends in the big cell. For a fortnight dear old K. was the fourth man. Then he was sent to Ruhleben. Wallace was the fifth member of the mess, a sort of day-boarder.

A week after K. had left us, most of the Englishmen got into trouble. As a punitive measure we were ejected from the large common cells, and C., L., Wallace, and I were lodged as far apart as possible. C. and I were warned to be ready to go to a penitentiary. W. received "solitary" for an indefinite time. Another fortnight, and all our intimate friends were sent back to Ruhleben. Only those members of the English colony who preferred prison to the camp, and four escapers, who had made two attempts, remained in the Stadtvogtei—ten in all.

But for Dr. Béland and one other prisoner, Wallace and I were almost confined to each other's society.

We had a fairly miserable time of it. The loss of most of our companions had unsettled us. To crown our misery, we were officially informed that we could not hope ever to be returned to camp, or even *a* camp, as we were considered dangerous to the German Empire.

The announcement ought to have made us feel rather proud. As we knew it to be only one of their specious arguments, it did nothing of the sort. Very soon I left it entirely out of my calculations. Wallace did not, however, but continued to attach importance to it. I must say this, in order to explain my later attitude toward another attempt to escape from prison. In the course of months I grew more and more convinced that we should go back to camp one day. Then would come our chance! I cannot explain my conviction. It was a "hunch."

Our belief, however, that we should have to wait did not serve as an excuse for inaction. Wallace and I pushed our preparations for the next escape as fast as possible, which was incredibly slow.

Our mainstay was an N. C. O. employed in the office. He was a queer individual, one of the plausible sort. His favorite saying characterized him sufficiently: "*Eine Hand waescht die andere* [one hand must wash the other]." His saving grace was the entirely frank attitude as to his outlook upon life and its obligations—lack of obligations, in his case. Through him we were able to take one great step forward—to procure maps. In the first part of this volume I have mentioned that the sale of maps to persons without a permit from the General Staff was forbidden in Prussia. According to the statement of our friend he got us the maps we wanted from a "relative" of his, who happened to be a bookseller. "He had these maps in stock and had forgotten to register them." One or two of them were indeed slightly shop-soiled. They were good maps, covering a part of Germany from Berlin, and including it to the Dutch frontier. Their price—well, it made my eyes water. They were worth it, though. For a prisoner of war the collection must have been unique. We each had a compass.

Chiefly on my advocacy we postponed the start again and again. The chances of getting away from prison were, to my mind, infinitesimally small. One attempt by another party

early in May was cleverly nipped in the bud. Our last attempt had not encouraged me to trust to luck, but I clung to my belief in a return to Ruhleben, which appeared as unlikely as ever, on the face of things. Once, however, we were ready to go, but almost at the last minute the help we had reckoned upon was not forthcoming.

Among the men who had tried their luck in May, 1917, were two who, very pluckily, had started to walk the whole distance between Ruhleben and the Dutch border. Unsuitable maps, in the first place, had been their undoing. They both spoke German—one like a native, the other not so well. They do not wish to be known, so, for the purpose of this narrative I will call them Kent and Tynsdale.

Tynsdale is a friend of mine. His pal Kent and he are good men. Do your best for them.—X.

This, penciled on a slip of paper and addressed to Wallace and me, was given to us by Tynsdale soon after his arrival. The brief phrase did not overstate their merits.

Tynsdale was small, wiry, and, at times, very reticent; Kent, tall, bulky, and—not reticent. In due course we came to live in a large cell together. They were as eager as were Wallace

and I for a new venture, but they were quite determined not to break prison. The information they gave us about Ruhleben from the escaper's point of view strengthened my prejudices against this course.

"Let 's wait a little longer. The weather will be favorable until October. If our hopes should sortie. Before it comes to that, something may prove vain, we can always make a desperate happen." This was the final conclusion we arrived at.

Something did happen—several things, in fact.

The first was an unexpected visit from a representative of the Dutch Legation in Berlin. It found us well prepared with an impressive protest against being kept in prison any longer. The same evening I confirmed the interview in two identical and rather lengthy letters, to which almost all of us, including the five men then in "solitary," subscribed their signatures.

One of these letters was delivered to the Dutch Minister by hand twenty-four hours after it had left the Stadtvogtei in the pocket of a person entirely unconnected with the postal service, military or otherwise. Consequently the German censor had no chance of perusing it. The other passed through the ordinary channels un-

til it was, presumably, decently buried in the censor's waste-basket.

A little later, German newspapers mentioned the fact that negotiations about the treatment of prisoners of war had taken place at The Hague, and that an agreement had been come to which was now awaiting ratification by the governments of Great Britain and Germany.

It so happened that at this time we had unusual facilities for the secret purchase of English newspapers. In a copy of the "Daily Telegraph" we read that the agreement had been ratified. Another week passed and a copy of the same paper contained paragraphs concerning civilian prisoners of war. The report of a speech in the House of Lords by Lord Newton, I believe, either in the same paper or in some other bought at the same time, helped us to interpret these paragraphs so far as they seemed to refer to cases like ours. At any rate, it gave us a talking-point in favor of an interpretation as we should have liked it, and announced further that the agreement had become operative in England on August 1, 1917, already a few days past.

A memorial in the shape of two letters addressed to the Dutch Minister in Berlin was the immediate result of reading these articles.

The letters went the same way as the former ones, and drew a good deal of good-natured chaff upon my head about "writing-sickness," "Secretary for Foreign Affairs," and charges to be made for every signature I came to collect in future.

Tynsdale and Kent had not been away from camp more than three months. They knew all the ins and outs of it, including a good deal of information not usually shouted from the housetops. Wallace and I, after an absence of thirty and seventeen months respectively, were comparative strangers to Ruhleben.

"Will you two come with Wallace and me?" I asked our new friends one day. "I should like to have your help in getting out of camp," I explained. "Later on I can probably be as useful to you." And I referred to my record as an escaper, to my equipment, and to my *maps*. They assented. They knew from previous discussions that I was not entirely in sympathy with their proposed route; or, rather, I had explained to them what I thought to be the advantages of a route I had in mind, which were confirmed by their own information.

As it appeared desirable that each member of the proposed expedition should be fully equipped as far as essentials were concerned,

we set to work feverishly making tracings of parts of our maps. We had to finish this work while still in prison, because it would not be possible to secure sufficient privacy in Ruhleben for this kind of thing. Fortunately I had anticipated something like this months before, and possessed some colored inks and drawing-pens. Tracing-paper I manufactured from thin, strong white paper, which I treated with olive-oil and benzene. We finished three copies before we left prison, the original making the fourth.

On the 23rd of August, 1917, a strong guard of policemen escorted a highly elated batch of British civilian prisoners through a part of Berlin, then by rail to Spandau, and again, *per pedes apostolorum,* to Ruhleben camp. We were nineteen in all.

Four Britishers stayed behind voluntarily; five more were in "solitary," having recently tried to escape and failed. Among the latter was our old friend L.

CHAPTER XX

RUHLEBEN AGAIN

WE arrived in Ruhleben shortly before noon, and were kept waiting for a long time just inside the gates, for the good of our souls. But then, the under dogs are always kept waiting somewhere for the good of their souls. So that was all right.

When our names had been called a number of times, and some supposedly witty remarks had been made by a sergeant, whose reputation in camp was no better than it should be, we were marched off to our barracks (No. 14), a wooden one, and the last one toward the eastern end of the camp, next to the "Tea House."

Part of it was divided off by a solid partition and enclosed by a separate wire fence. This was the punishment place of the camp, called "the Bird Cage."

The other and larger part was empty; had, in fact, been cleared that morning for our reception, much to the disgust of the former inhabitants, who had been very comfortable in

their home-made cubicles and corners. Now the place was absolutely bare, except for the litter of broken shelves and partitions on the floor.

We were still contemplating it doubtfully when we received our orders: "Beds will arrive presently. They are to be placed in two rows in the center of the barracks. Nothing shall be hung on the walls, or the beams and supports. No partitions or corners will be allowed. The barracks is to be kept bare, so that the inmates can be seen at any hour of the night. The electric light is to be kept burning all night and must not be obscured in any way." Thus ran the gist of them.

We were pretty wroth. "Call that a return to the privileges and liberties of an ordinary prisoner of war?" rang our complaint.

At night our indignation broke forth again. We had to be in bed by 10 P. M. At 10:45 a patrol of three privates and an N. C. O. came to count us, tramping noisily round and round in their ammunition boots, over the bare wooden floor. Not much to complain about in that. But they repeated it six times during the night, and that was distinctly "off." For many of us, sleep, even during the intervals, was difficult on account of the glaring brightness of the electric light.

Our barracks captain protested strongly to the captain of the camp. So did virtually every member of the barracks privately, and gradually this nuisance abated. The six times we were disturbed dwindled down to four, then to three; and sometimes we were inspected only twice, when the patrol considerately kept outside and counted us through the windows.

Our reception in Ruhleben was rather flattering. I do not know how many new acquaintances I made during the first fortnight; several hundred, I should think. Now and again, inevitably, I met a man who immediately told me what he would have done "if I had been in your shoes and got as far as you. They would never have brought *me* back alive!"

I had only to look at my barracks companions to see that we bore the prison stamp, and the remarks of my friends did not give me a chance to forget my own appearance. Compared with the Ruhlebenites proper, we looked more like animated corpses than living beings. Our faces were ashen gray, even our lips had paled. The skin around our eyes remained drawn and puckered, until the eyes had accustomed themselves again to the strong light of the open sky.

Prison life had taken its toll of our vitality,

particularly among the long-timers. For a few hours the fresh air acted upon us like heady wine, and during the following days it simply sapped our strength.

Kent and Tynsdale were in comparatively good condition. Wallace was bad, but had an appetite, and recovered quickly. I was the worst of the four. My physical condition did not make me a desirable companion for an arduous venture, and since we found it impossible to "make a move" at once, as we had intended, I deliberately set myself to repairing the damage as quickly as I could. I took plenty of rest, and, avoiding any but the gentlest exercise, grew gradually stronger. About the middle of the second week I started some very mild training.

Yet I still remained nervous and distraught; more so than my companions, who showed signs of the same trouble. It was, however, merely the nervousness of inaction, for I was eager to start. The camp was not even as desirable as we had pictured it. Barracks No. 14 was far less comfortable in every respect than the barracks we had called our own before we made our first attempt. Everything was dirty, and we missed our accustomed privacy. The two daily roll-calls, which took place on the playing-field at seven o'clock in the morning and again

twelve hours later, were an unmitigated nuisance.

What, then, could be more tempting than to woo Fortune again? If she proved fickle, we would go back to the Stadtvogtei. Under the new arrangement the punishment for a "simple escape" by a military prisoner was to be a fortnight's imprisonment. At first we interpreted the paragraph as applying to civilian prisoners also. Now we had become more doubtful about it. Our friends, who had been sent to prison after the 1st of August, had more than doubly exceeded the stipulated time before we left the camp. What more likely than that the Germans would treat the agreement as another "scrap of paper" and send us to comfortable winter quarters, if we were caught?

We had intended to start within a few days of our arrival in camp. This we found impossible, but for two reasons the delay was fortunate. It permitted us to recruit our health and get accustomed to the open air, and it brought us nearer to the time of the new moon in the middle of September.

About a week after our arrival, Wallace decided not to come with us. For months he had had a plan of his own, which recommended itself

neither to Tynsdale, Kent, nor me. He rather liked the idea of playing a lone hand, and his strong desire to see a little more of his friends in Ruhleben finally decided him. Tynsdale, Kent, and I "carried on."

Our plans were simple enough, once we had got out of camp. First of all we intended to make for Berlin. From the capital a railway journey of about twenty hours (including a break of seven) was to take us to a small town in the northwestern part of Germany, sixty kilometers from the Dutch frontier as the crow flies. From there we intended to walk, the distance by road being rather more than seventy miles. One considerable river would have to be crossed, we did not quite know how, but we were all fairly powerful swimmers.

Tynsdale's knowledge of German was not good enough to make it possible for him to travel on the railway without a companion to do the talking. Kent, his particular chum, was more than willing to take the risk of being Tynsdale's courier, and proposed that he and his friend should always travel in one compartment, while I traveled alone in another. This arrangement was obviously unfair. Granted the wisdom of traveling in two parties, Kent would be taking the greater risk all the time. We

finally agreed that Tynsdale was to be alternately in Kent's and my charge.

We had maps and compasses. I had a water-bottle and a knapsack, and Kent obtained another knapsack in camp. A third and two water-bottles would have to be bought en route.

Ordinary wearing apparel, dictated by the railway journey, we had; also sufficient underclothes for cold weather, and two thick overcoats between us. Two oilsilks of mine would protect my friends on rainy days. I insisted on carrying a heavy naval oilskin, sufficiently large to make a decent ground-cloth for the three of us. If possible, we intended carrying food for ten days; cabin-biscuits, dripping, compressed beef, chocolate, cocoa-and-milk powder, sugar, and raisins.

A friend of mine, whom I have mentioned several times in this narrative, spoke to me one morning. "Take," he began oracularly and with a twinkle in his eye, "a pound of real Scotch oatmeal, a pound of dripping, and a pound of sugar. Mix well. Roll out the dough until it is about three quarters of an inch thick, and bake it in a hot oven for four hours. The result will resemble shortbread. It is immensely sustaining. That it will crumble easily into a coarse powder need concern you only in

so far as you will have to carry it suitably wrapped. Handkerchiefs will do. At a pinch, a cake per day, smaller than your hand, will keep you going indefinitely. And," he added readily, "if you 'll give me the material, I 'll do them for you. But mind you chew 'em well when you eat 'em. It 'll take some time to masticate them properly. You must do that, to get the full benefit of the oatmeal."

The square cakes, a little smaller than the palm of a man's hand, which he handed to us in a parcel a few days after, were rather heavy for their size. We thought of carrying ten per man, reduced the biscuits to two per day, and discarded meat and cocoa altogether.

To carry all this during the railway journey, we had a cheap German portmanteau, which I had bought for this purpose in prison, and two small leather hand-bags. As to money, I was fairly well supplied. My companions got hold of smaller sums, and between us we had enough even for an emergency.

In the meantime we managed to be seen together as little as possible. Escaping was in the air. Two attempts from other barracks failed during the first fortnight. What was worse for us, three men from our barracks took

the bit in their teeth and went one night. They were in cells again before dawn.

The camp authorities were wide awake and slowly strengthened the guards. More police dogs were reported to be arriving almost daily. (I doubt whether these reports were correct.) N. C. O.'s patrolled the sentries incessantly, or concealed themselves and watched places for hours where they thought fugitives would pass. As long as we knew beforehand where these places were this did not matter much, but it certainly increased my nervousness and impatience. I believe I was a sore trial to my friends with my incessant, irrational pleading for "something to be done."

Kent and Tynsdale had made their first escape from camp by simply bribing the sentry at the gate and one other, and walking out. We had hoped to repeat this performance. Both these sentries were still in camp on guard-duty. Immediately after our arrival we sounded them as to their willingness to earn a few hundred marks easily. We did not do this ourselves, but made use of the good offices of a friend of Tynsdale's, who had extensive dealings of a different nature with the two German soldiers and who could bring a good deal of pressure to bear on them. To appreciate the importance of

the help he rendered us, it must be remembered that no soldier was allowed to talk with a prisoner. It would have been difficult for us to establish direct communication with the two soldiers. Not only was the punishment barracks least suited for anything like secret meetings, but its inmates were kept under more continuous surveillance than the rest of the interned.

The two soldiers were quite willing to do business, but maintained that the most they could do was to take an entirely passive part. The old, easy way was out of the question. The camp authorities were too suspicious of the existence of irregularities among the guards and of the danger of fresh attempts now that the "gang" was back in camp. "If we get certain posts, we won't challenge during a specified time," was what the soldiers gave us to understand.

The situation became worse when one of these soldiers was suddenly sent to the front. His manifold activities for the benefit of the prisoners—payment being made with English food—had at last got him into trouble. The other man, his associate in most of the deals, went about expecting the same fate and became quite intractable for a few days. As nothing happened to him, he gradually assumed his normal state of mind.

We intended to leave camp at the western corner. This was farther removed from the escapers' barracks and nearest to Spandau. Our route was to lead us through part of Spandau.

A box in Barracks No. 8 was our headquarters. There our equipment was kept, and there we intended to dress.

The windows in the loft of Barracks No. 4 gave upon the enclosure of the Visitors' Barracks. They were about two feet square and covered with wire netting which could easily be removed. As the loft of this barracks was divided into a large number of small cubicles, only the inhabitants of one cubicle needed to be taken into our confidence to any extent. They undertook with alacrity to have everything ready at a few hour's notice, including the rope we should have to descend by. Once in the enclosure of the Visitors' Barracks we should have only one wire fence to climb to get into the space between this and the outer wooden fence. The wire fences consisted of strong chicken-wire with barbed-wire strands along the top. They were about eight feet high. The wooden fence extended only a little way. The rest had been destroyed by a fire which had occurred in camp in June of that year. Along part of the way

we should be partially protected from the view of the sentries by the wooden fence and the structures about us.

There was a sunken path which was well lighted by electricity, and well guarded. The sentries walked on top of a bank and were able to see most of the space between the wire and the wooden fence. Post No. 2 was at the corner of the wooden fence, where the path met the road which ran along the front of the camp, and extended along the path for about seventy yards. Then came Post No. 3. The end of the wooden fence was nearer to the road than to the other end of Post No. 2.

The attempt was to be made when our man was on duty. He was to be deaf and blind. This would leave us free to concentrate our attention upon Post No. 3.

"Next Sunday!" Kent told me at length on a Friday. "Are you ready?"

"Good heavens, man, I 've been ready these two weeks past!" Then I began to ruminate: "Sunday? That's rather awkward!"

"It is, but do you think we ought to delay it on that account?"

"No, certainly not! Does Tynsdale realize the state of affairs?"

"Have n't discussed them with him. If we two come to an agreement, he 'll be sure to take the same view."

There were two objections to the day proposed—one because it was a Sunday, which made getting into Berlin rather risky, the other because it happened to be the 16th of September, which made getting away from the capital additionally difficult.

As to Sunday, food was scarce in Germany, especially in the capital, and illegal trading was rife. Every Sunday the inhabitants flocked into the country in multitudes to buy farm produce from the peasants direct, offering prices much higher than those fixed by law. To stop this, the police frequently detained passengers who were traveling into town on the trunk and local railways, in the Underground, and on trams, and inspected their baggage. A search of our bags and bundles would mean immediate arrest.

Secondly, at 2 A.M. on the 17th of September —the Monday after the day we had chosen— summer time was to change to astronomical time. Consequently, trains all over the country would leave independently of the printed timetables during several hours before and after the

hands of the clocks were moved back. Thus we could not be sure whether or not we could catch the train we had selected.

We came to the conclusion that we should have to risk it. But could we not minimize the first, the greater of the two risks, by reducing the amount of our luggage? "We 'll take only one of the small hand-bags, discard these and these articles, and carry food for six days only," we decided.

The amount of food which we finally took with us worked out per man per day as follows: a bar of chocolate, two small cabin-biscuits with dripping, one cake of the famous "escapers' short-bread," two or three pieces of sugar, and half a dozen raisins. A tin of Horlick's malted milk tablets was carried in reserve, and also a small flask of brandy.

CHAPTER XXI

THE DAY

ON the 16th of September, 1917, our man was on guard at Post No. 2 from 7 till 9 P.M. and again four hours later. He had instructions to expect something between 8 and 9 o'clock, or, failing that, during his next shift. The latter part of his instructions had been an afterthought. It was part and parcel of our plan to catch the train from the Lehrter Bahnhof in Berlin at 11:47 P.M. It would have inconvenienced us very considerably if we had had to delay our departure. If everything went satisfactorily as far as the sentry was concerned, he was to receive his reward the following morning, no matter what happened to us.

That evening we were to be counted for the last time that season at 7 o'clock. The roll-call took place on the playing-field in the center of the race-course. This was outside the strongly protected camp proper, and it was beginning to be too dark, at the hour mentioned, to let the

prisoners outside of any of the three wire fences surrounding it.

As soon as the ranks broke after passing back into the inner camp enclosure, we made our way casually and separately to Barracks No. 8. The box we entered was quite deserted. Two of its inhabitants could be seen talking near one of the entrances to the barracks, from where they could hail any chance visitor who might intend to look them up in their quarters. We dressed as rapidly as possible, yet were somewhat later in getting ready than we had expected to be. Our baggage had been taken to the selected cubicle in the loft of Barracks No. 4 during the afternoon by men not specially interested in our venture.

The cubicle of our friends was in darkness. The open window opposite the wood-framed pasteboard door admitted a faint rose-gray after-glow from the western sky. The confined space seemed crowded with dimly seen forms who whispered that all was ready.

Somewhat perversely, I thought, Tynsdale suddenly demanded that I accompany him "to have a look at the gate." It was a double gate, plentifully protected by barbed wire, which gave entrance to the enclosure of the Visitors' Barracks during the weekly half-hour when visitors

were allowed to see the prisoners. Without heeding my protest in the least he disappeared, and I had to follow after.

"I think we had better climb over the gate instead of dropping from the window," was all he answered to my questions about his unexpected vagary. To my somewhat heated opposition against any alteration in our oft- and well-considered course of action he turned a deaf ear.

"I 'm going to climb over here," he announced truculently after a brief inspection, and almost immediately began to suit the action to his words. As little attention as he had paid to me, he paid less to some twenty or thirty men, mostly sailors, who were lounging near the spot. And then a very fine thing happened. As soon as these men saw what Tynsdale was up to, and without any perceptible hesitancy, they began walking carelessly about and around him, shielding his activities in this fashion more effectively than they could have done by any other means. As for myself, I hurried back to the loft.

"Come on," I whispered breathlessly to Kent, "quick! Tynsdale is climbing over the gate. He 's stark, staring mad." I grasped the rope, squeezed through the window, and was in such a hurry to get down that I let the rope slide through my fingers. Naturally a good deal of

skin stuck to the rope. I landed with a bump and had just time to roll out of the way as Kent's two hundred pounds came crashing after me. We got up, both with smarting palms, while overcoats seemed to be raining from the window above. We managed to catch the two grips as they fell. During all this time we could hear Tynsdale making a terrific din among the wires. As soon as he had negotiated the first two obstacles he started to overcome the third fence, while Kent and I carried our paraphernalia to the foot of it. Then Kent went over the top, and I heaved the things over to Tynsdale, who stood ready to receive them. Kent was a heavy man, and he appeared to me more than a little awkward at that moment. How he ever managed to get over the fence without bringing the whole guard about our ears I cannot yet understand. My own performance probably sounded as bad to them.

As I let go my last hold, a stage-whisper from the window about fifteen yards away, reached our ears, "Drop, you fools, drop!" The men in the loft could see the sentries over the top of the intervening low wooden barracks. To judge from the suppressed excitement in their voices

one of the sentries must have been coming our way with much determination.

A patch of weeds on our left was the only cover near us. Grabbing the second portmanteau, which was still lying near the fence, I dived for it headlong and fell down beside Kent. Tynsdale, who had gone forward, beat a hasty retreat toward us and disappeared from view on Kent's other side.

There we lay, out of breath, and dangerously near the lower end. I did not dare to raise my head even, and then after a long, long interval, the suppressed voices sounded again, straight from heaven: "All clear. Go ahead."

We reached the end of the wooden fence. The enemy sentry was nowhere to be seen. A few quick, long steps carried us across the sunken path, into the potato-field and beyond the circle of the glaring electric lights. Kent was in the lead. Suddenly he dropped, and we followed his example just as the gate of the soldiers' barracks, perhaps fifty yards on our left, clicked open. Then it slammed shut.

Potato-vines offer very good cover for a man in a prone position. It was dark, too. But, lying there, I had the uncomfortable feeling that some large and conspicuous part of my anatomy

must be sticking out into plain view. I flattened myself as much as possible and vainly tried to decrease my bulk by general muscular contraction, but seemed to swell to ever greater dimensions. When I lifted my head after some time I saw two round gray-and-black objects above the potatoes. These were my companions. We had all given way to the same impulse at the same time. Nothing menacing was to be seen. Silently we got to our feet and shortly after gained the road.

From now on we were to play the parts of harmless German civilians, and consequently the need for silence had passed. "What made that gate open and slam?" I asked Kent. "I did n't take the time to look, myself."

"Two soldiers came out of the barracks and went toward camp."

"Well, it 's all right, I suppose. You know this road. You lead."

Kent turned and walked off, closely followed by Tynsdale and me. We had not taken many steps when I suddenly saw the end of a cigarette glow up in the dark ahead of us. Kent hesitated, stopped, and whispered to us.

"Oh, go on!" I answered irritably. "We can't stop here." Kent walked on and past two soldiers standing by the roadside. They

stepped forward, barring our way. I made as if to pass them, but they did not move aside to make room.

"What are you doing here?" one of them asked.

"What do you want?" I countered.

"We want to know who you are and where you come from."

"What right have you to stop us in this fashion and ask us questions?"

"What do you mean by stopping anybody on a public road?" Kent's voice amplified my question. I had not noticed that he had turned and joined our group. "This is a public road, you know."

Tynsdale, who could not speak German very well, kept discreetly behind Kent and me and felt, no doubt, as if he were intruding.

"This is n't an ordinary public road. There is an English prison camp down that way. Our instructions are to keep an eye on the traffic along here, what there is of it." It was always the same man who was doing the talking. His statement sounded a little odd to me since neither he nor his companion was conspicuously armed, and neither one wore a helmet, two signs that they were not on duty. "Unless you have a passport or can establish your identity by

some other means you will have to come with us, so we can make sure who you are."

"No, I have n't a passport," I said slowly. "You don't always require one just walking back and forth from your work." I was trying to think of the right thing to do or to say, and particularly whether to risk about ten years in a penitentiary, if the only move which seemed open to us should fail.

"Oh, anything will do," the soldier continued, "an envelop addressed to you, for example."

I had made up my mind. "Right. I 'll give you something. Here 's my passport," and I handed him a one-hundred-mark bill from my pocket-book.

The soldier looked at the bill, then at me. He poked his companion in the ribs with his elbow and showed it to him.

"See what that fellow calls a passport? Is that all right?"

"That 's all right," said the other.

"Boy, boy! You are some guys, you are! Say, are you only going for a night in Berlin, or are you not coming back?"

"That is as it may be," I told him.

"Say, what barracks are you fellows from?"

"You need n't worry about that yet. You 'll hear all about that in the morning."

"Oh, all right! But you beat it now, quick!" and they turned to go. But I had an idea of making further use of them.

"Say," I called, "we want to get into Spandau. Is it likely that we shall be stopped? Are there many sentries about there? Which is the best road to take?"

"Plenty. Walk straight on and then turn to your left across the railway." They went away.

When I looked about for the grip, which I had put down in order to get at my pocket-book, I found it gone. Kent had walked on. Tynsdale was still hovering close to me.

"Where 's that portmanteau?" I asked him excitedly. "I put it down here."

"I don't know," he answered. "Did n't see it at all. Where did you put it down?"

For a few seconds we looked underneath the bushes without success. "A man who will take a bribe will steal," was a not unnatural conclusion to come to.

"Wait a minute," I flung over my shoulder, and started in hot pursuit after the two soldiers. It was the larger of our two grips that was missing, containing the most important part of our equipment.

"What the hell do you want now?" is the way

they received me. Neither one of them was carrying anything.

"Oh, nothing," I replied airily. Being unable to catch them in the act I dared not take the risk of accusing them. "I thought I had lost something," I said.

The one who spoke muttered something threateningly. They were naturally very anxious to get rid of us now.

"Come along," I said to Tynsdale, resignedly, when I had rejoined him. "We 've got to make the best of it." A little farther down the road Kent was waiting for us in the shadow of a bush, with both grips. He had picked mine up when he started to walk ahead and had caused me a few bad moments. Here, we brushed ourselves with our hands and handkerchiefs. A short walk through wide, deserted streets, most of them flanked by factory buildings, proved pleasantly unexciting.

It was still early in the evening, but the wide thoroughfare of Spandau, not far from the railway station, was deserted, except for a small group of people between two tall light-standards, who, like us, were waiting for a tram to Berlin. The arc-lights fizzed slightly now and again, and cast fleeting purple shadows over the

island, which served as a platform for the tram-cars.

We three stood a little apart, occasionally exchanging a word or two in German. We were hot with excitement and exertion. I was carrying the large portmanteau and an overcoat over my arm. Kent had the other bag, Tynsdale an oilsilk wrapped in his overcoat.

The first tram was crowded, but a second, immediately behind, was only moderately full. As prearranged, we got on the driver's platform, the darkest part of the vehicle, and the least sought after.

For the first quarter of an hour of our ride, tram-lines and street ran parallel to, but on the other side of, the railway, which passed along the front of the camp. The eastern gate of Ruhleben camp was at one point not more than two hundred yards from a stopping-place, where officers and men of the camp-guard usually boarded the trams when going to town. Hardly half that distance away a sentry patrolled.

The possibility of an untoward meeting at this point kept us on edge. If somebody from Ruhleben had accidentally entered our car, we intended to take no notice of it, unless he came to the front platform. What we should have

done in that case, I do not know. Our resourcefulness was, fortunately, not put to the test.

The front platform became fairly crowded. I succeeded in manœuvering Tynsdale into a corner, and planted myself in front of him, thus cutting him off from any likelihood of being spoken to by any of the passengers. Kent could take care of himself, better perhaps than I, for he was readier with his tongue. Half-way to Berlin, in front of West End Station, Charlottenburg, where eighteen months ago my railway journey had started, the track was blocked by a car which had broken down. It took half an hour to shunt it upon a siding and clear the line. We were not pressed for time, and remained in our places, almost the only passengers who did so.

Our immediate destination was the Wilhelms Platz in Berlin. From there we had to get to the Lehrter Station. Without local knowledge ourselves, we had gathered an idea of how to do it. Kent was to be guide and acting manager, but he kept consulting me, who was well content to follow.

Broadway at the most crowded hour of the day is hardly so packed as were, that night, the far wider streets of the German capital. It seemed as if the whole population of Berlin were

wandering more or less aimlessly about. Two solid streams of people moved in opposite directions on the pavements, and spilled over the curb into the roadway. In a way, this was favorable to us. Except by accident, it would have been impossible to find us. On the other hand, it made it difficult for a party of three to proceed by tram or omnibus. At every stopping-place of these public conveyances a free fight seemed to be going on for the places inside them; not the rush we are accustomed to complain about in London, but a scramble in which brute force triumphed unchecked by any trivial regard for decent manners and the rights of others.

After we had alighted and threaded our way across the Wilhelms Platz, Kent found a station of the Underground.

"Take a first-class ticket for yourself. I 'll buy two," were his instructions, whispered in German.

I bought a third-class one. I did not want to. I was merely too funky to ask for first-class. It meant the pronunciation of an extra word. I could have spoken it as correctly as any German, but suppose there was no first-class on the Underground! They 'd get suspicious! It was very silly of me. Mistake No. 1.

Naturally, the third-class was crowded. It is

not the custom in Germany to be polite to the gentler sex. I knew it as well as anybody. But when an elderly woman, looking very tired, was clinging to a strap just in front of me, I was on my feet before I knew what I was doing. She declined the proffered seat in confusion. To repair my "break," I hastily sat down again, my ears burning. Mistake No. 2. Kent looked daggers at me from the opposite seat, and as soon as he had a chance I got my wigging.

At the Leipziger Platz the throng was thicker, if anything. There was not the faintest chance of getting into a train.

"There are some droshkies down there," said Kent, pulling my arm to attract my attention.

"Get one!" I answered curtly.

The marvelous thing was that the driver accepted us as fares. The luggage we were carrying, and our destination, Lehrter Bahnhof, did the trick, I believe.

The drive through the Sieges Allee, past the greater atrocity of the "Iron Hindenburg," and farther through deserted residential streets, was splendid. We lit cigarettes, and I regained my coolness. I wanted it. Grimly I reflected that two mistakes were quite enough for one day.

We found the booking-hall of the Lehrter Sta-

tion crowded at eleven o'clock. Kent and I deposited our luggage and took our places in the long queue in front of the booking-office.

"What time the eleven-forty-seven for Hanover to-night?" I asked a porter who was passing me.

"Twelve-forty-seven, but to-night only."

We had almost two hours to get through, somehow and somewhere. Not at the station, that was certain.

"Follow Tynsdale and me. Keep as far in the rear as possible, and don't lose us," I told Kent.

The Lehrter Station is situated in the north-western part of Berlin. There seemed no decent cafés near at hand in which we could spend the time and get a drink. As we were very thirsty, however, we found a low-class place not very far off in which we ordered a glass of beer each. When the waitress brought the drink she told us ungraciously that the café was going to be closed in a few minutes. Hastily we emptied our glasses, glad to get out of the place with as little delay as possible. Three German privates were eyeing us from a table close to ours much too attentively for our liking.

Outside, the previous formation was resumed. Sauntering very slowly along, I led back past

the station again, along the river Spree, then through the empty streets of a residential neighborhood, and finally, by accident, into the Friedrich Strasse with its dense throng of people. On the way I kept up a semblance of conversation with Tynsdale. I would not go into a café again, so near closing time, thinking we were safest among the crowd, which was moving quite as leisurely as we were. Tynsdale was content to follow me, and Kent had no chance of pressing his objections.

More slowly, if possible, we sauntered back to the station, where we arrived with fifty minutes to spare. Having got our luggage, we spent the time in the waiting-room and restaurant, over beer, coffee, and lemonade. German cigarettes, bought at the counter, enabled us to enjoy a soothing smoke.

"Shall we go out on the platform now?" asked Kent twenty minutes before train time.

"No; wait," I answered. Later I explained that, since our absence was presumably known in camp by that time, and since there was a chance that passports might be inspected at a terminus, I thought it would be better if we rushed to the platform as late-comers.

If I recollect rightly, Kent was to chaperon Tynsdale as far as Hanover. At the last mo-

ment I requested that he should come into my compartment. I should have been worried about my friends if I had traveled alone in comparative security, and was sure of feeling happier with Tynsdale by my side. Rightly or wrongly, I imagined I could take care of him just as well as Kent.

The train was a stopping one, and was crowded to the last seat when we tried to board it.

"Can we get into a first-class compartment?" I asked a busy official. "There is no room in the second."

"Third and second only on this train," he answered, and then shoved Tynsdale and me into an already crowded carriage, from which he ejected a soldier who had a third-class ticket.

"Sit down," I said peremptorily to Tynsdale, who obeyed. I stood in the gangway, leaning against the window. Kent disappeared into another compartment.

Then we were off, past Ruhleben camp to Spandau as the first stop. It appeared a foregone conclusion that our absence was known in camp by now. We feared that the train might be searched in Spandau. I took some comfort from its crowded state. When another crush of people packed themselves into the little standing

room left, I blessed the scarcity of trains which caused the crowding. Information has since reached me that the camp authorities did not discover our escape until roll-call the next morning.

Within the next hour the compartment emptied, until we were left alone, but for a German N. C. O., who, fat as a pig, was breathing stertorously in his sleep. Tynsdale was slumbering behind his overcoat. I followed his example for short spells, the uneasy feeling that I had something or somebody to take care of following me into confused dreams.

At the Hanover main station our luggage went into the cloak-room and we ourselves into the waiting-room and restaurant to have a cup of coffee.

I knew Hanover fairly well, and was to conduct my friends to the Eilenriede, a huge public park encircling a quarter of the town. The greater part of it is really a densely timbered forest, where we could spend the morning, or part of it, in safety. Tynsdale and I in front, Kent in the rear, we wended our way thither, as much as possible through back streets.

It was a typical September morning, promis-

ing a hot day. The life of the town was beginning to stir: people were going to work, milkmen were making their rounds, a belated farmer's cart rattled over the cobbles now and again; from the main thoroughfares came the buzzing of trolleys and the clanging of bells.

In the park Kent closed up, and we walked abreast for a time, talking freely in German. We felt tired, and finally sat down in a secluded spot, surrounded by thick timber and undergrowth. At long intervals early-morning ramblers passed us, solitary old gentlemen, and several couples who most decidedly felt no craving for further company, and consequently took more notice of us than the old gentlemen. Near by, two women were gathering wood and loading it into dilapidated "prams." They were usually out of sight, but we heard them all the time, breaking the dry sticks into convenient lengths.

Gradually the sun sucked up the mists, but the haze of an autumn day remained. Slanting shafts of light struck through the foliage, which sent off scintillating reflections, where it moved in a very slight breeze, while its shadows seemed to dance merrily on the ground. A full chorus of birds warbled and twittered in praise of the warmth of the waning summer. The hum of in-

sects was in the air. A butterfly winged past at intervals, and behind our seat a colony of ants was busily engaged.

The leaves had begun to fall. They covered the ground between the trees, but the branches themselves only showed the dark-green foliage of summer.

Our surroundings moved me intensely. I had not seen in this way a green thing in seventeen months of prison life. I had not been among green trees for over three years. The seat, hard as it was, was comfortable to our tired bodies. We felt lazy, and when we had discussed the night's events, and outlined the next move, the talk languished. We were hungry, too. Two biscuits apiece and a rather generous allowance of chocolate tasted good.

Kent told us that he had immediately found a seat in the train, the night before. His compartment had emptied sooner than ours, and he had chatted through most of the journey with his only traveling companion, a lieutenant. I do not know how many lies he told him.

At ten o'clock we walked back to the town. The heat was oppressive by now. A circuitous route, to waste time, brought us into the main street, the Georg Strasse. In an arcade I entered a shop for sporting-equipment, leaving

Tynsdale to wait outside with Kent, and obtained two military water-bottles and an extremely shoddy knapsack at an exorbitant price. Kent bought cigars. A strong clasp-knife was added to my equipment. At a tram-crossing I inquired from a policeman about the cars to Hainholz. I intended to repeat the trick Wallace and I had made use of ten months before, and avoid leaving from the main station. It was too early to obtain a meal in a restaurant then—about eleven o'clock—so we went into the famous Kafé Kroepke, where we sat at different tables in the order of our entrance.

On the way back from the station, carrying our luggage and walking in the usual order, I caught sight of a very detective-like individual crossing the road toward us. He fell in behind Tynsdale and me, between us and Kent. As well as I could I watched him, but we did not seem to interest him. While we stood waiting for the tram, Kent closed up, and I nearly choked with rage. I thought his instructions, "Do as we do, but keep apart," covered everything. Now he was asking me questions. But, after all, it was only leveling up the score of the previous night against *me*.

At Hainholz I went to the ticket-window and asked for two second-class tickets to Bremen.

Kent has asked for one ten minutes before, and had been told to wait.

"Are you two traveling together?" asked the booking clerk.

"No, no. I 'm traveling with my friend," and I waved an uncertain hand toward Tynsdale, who looked on with an impassive face from a seat behind us.

"Do I understand you to want a pass for two, and you," turning to Kent, who was standing beside me, "for one?"

Kent signified his assent.

"I want two tickets to Bremen. Two!" said I.

"You see," explained the man, "I have no tickets to Bremen in stock. I 've got to write out passes for you. It 'll save work, if two are traveling together. I can make out a joint pass for two then." Thank heaven it was nothing else!

We rushed to the platform only just in time —and waited for half an hour for the overdue train, another one of the parliamentary variety.

Tynsdale and I got the last two seats in a compartment occupied by a well-dressed and well-groomed man, four flappers with school-maps, and a very pretty woman.

I felt much relieved when the train started. Another part of our venture had come to an end! We had now left the direct route toward Holland, the route by which the authorities would expect us to travel. Cloppenburg, which was the ultimate objective of our railway journey, lay in a straight line not so many miles to the west of us. Yet we were going to spend another seven and a half hours in getting there, and had to change the direction of our flight twice.

It was, therefore, with considerable composure that I sat listening to the chatter of the flappers and the occasional snores of the man, and watching the landscape through the window.

It stretched flat to the horizon, dancing in the heat haze. Toward four o'clock, white clouds made their appearance in the azure sky, followed presently by gray ones. When we drew into Bremen Station, where we had to wait forty minutes for another train, due to start at half-past five, a heavy shower was drumming on the glass roof.

Our traveling companions remained with us all the way. About half an hour before we reached our destination, the pretty lady next to me began to make ready for her arrival. Her hair, an abundance of it, required a lot of pat-

ting and pulling about, which did not alter its appearance in any way to the male eye. She sat forward in her seat, and with her back straight and her arms raised, she assumed the captivating pose of a woman putting the last deft touches to her toilet. Although anxious not to appear rude, I tried to lose none of her movements, which were the more charming to me as I had not seen a woman of her class close to me for over three years. Her rounded, well-modeled arms and shoulders showed dimly through the thin blouse. Fortunately, she was half turning her back toward me and my companion, and we could gaze our fill.

"Was n't she pretty!" were Tynsdale's first words in the station restaurant after four hours of silence.

"Was n't she!"

We were having a cup of coffee, sociably sitting together at the same table. I went out to buy the three tickets and have a wash. To my astonishment, there was real soap for use, not merely to look at as a curiosity, in the station lavatory. I made a remark about this extraordinary fact to the attendant, who told me quite frankly that he made it a point to have real soap, and that it was profitable for him to buy it at

eighteen marks per pound in bulk. This implied illicit trading, and the outspokenness of his statement was illustrative of the general evasion of the strict trading laws and price limits.

The journey to Oldenburg, our next stopping-place, took half an hour only, but was the most trying part of our escape. We were on the main line to an important naval and airship center, Wilhelmshaven, and although we did not approach it within fifty miles, the fact never left my mind. Furthermore, the compartment Tynsdale and I were in was so crowded that we had at first to stand. As soon as a seat became vacant, Tynsdale slipped into it. It was next the window on the other side of the car, happily away from an inquisitive and extremely talkative individual, who, having been rebuffed by an officer and earned the hostile glare of a man in naval uniform, lapsed for a short time only into comparative silence. Before he opened his sluice-gates again, I had sat down beside Tynsdale, covertly watching the dangerous lunatic, as I called him, and sending up heartfelt prayers that my friend would stick to reading the book which he held in his hand as usual. He would not do so, however, but kept looking out of the window, giving an opportunity every time, I

felt, for our conversational friend to open fire.

The scheduled thirty-five minutes would not come to an end. Even when my watch told me that they were past, the train still kept stopping at small stations and in the open country, and jogging on again after a short halt. My anxiety was great, but at last I had my reward when we arrived at Oldenburg.

What is it that makes one place feel "safe" and another menacing? In most cases it is difficult to explain. The comfortable assurance of security I had here, I put down to the absence of crowds in the station, and to the fact that a booking-office between the platforms permitted the purchase of new tickets without the necessity of passing through the gates with their hostile guard of soldiers. Eighteen months earlier the shutters in front of the windows of a similar intermediate office at Dortmund Station, had caused me to reflect that the authorities wanted to force all passengers to come under the scrutiny of the guard and the ever-present detectives. Now the face of the clerk on the other side of the glass appeared a good omen. We were not in Prussia, by the way, but in the Duchy of Oldenburg.

Our train was due to leave in twenty minutes from the time of our belated arrival. After a

short wait on the platform it was shunted in. We all three bundled into the same compartment, but took seats in different corners. We did not carry through very carefully this show of not belonging together, as nobody joined us. Kent bought two small baskets of fruit from a vendor who passed along the train, and we were sufficiently hungry to start munching their contents at once.

During the first part of this last stretch of an hour and a half we remained alone. Dusk was rapidly changing into total darkness. Soon it became impossible to distinguish the names of the feebly lighted stations. I checked them carefully from the open time-table beside me, lest we should alight too soon or too late.

At 8:30 we arrived at Cloppenburg. The first and probably the most dangerous part of our venture lay behind us.

CHAPTER XXII

ORDER OF MARCH

MY two companions had entrusted themselves to my leadership for the tramp to the frontier. My first business was to pilot them out of town from the right side, if possible, and, what was more difficult, by the most favorable road. I thought it, under the circumstances, about as hard a task as could be set me, at the very beginning. If so slight an undertaking as ours may be spoken of in military terms, I should compare it to a rearguard action and the successful withdrawal from touch with the enemy's advance scouts.

It was a very dark night. Only occasional stars glimmered through the canopy of clouds. I knew nothing of the town, except what little information could be gleaned from a motor-map, scale 1 to 300,000. The time-table had taught us that we were to arrive at one station, and that a train was to start from another about half an hour later. A number of people were likely to change from the one to the other. To follow

them, as if we were of the same mind, would give us a start off and carry us beyond the eyes of the railway officials. After that I should have to do the best I could, without the help of either a compass, which I could not consult, or the stars, which were not in evidence.

As long as we were likely to meet people the order of march was to be: I in the van, Tynsdale and Kent in the rear, as far behind as possible without losing touch.

Most of the people who had left the station with us kept on the same road, thus proving our calculation correct. We walked in their rear, I carrying the portmanteau, which rapidly grew heavy. Big trees lined the streets throughout; their shadows made it impossible to see more than a few steps ahead. I followed behind the other travelers more by sound than by sight. My companions had to keep within arm's length of me. There seemed to be a maze of streets, and, trusting to luck, I turned into one of them. We found ourselves alone. At another corner, instinct bade me take a sharp turn to the right. Then the streets lost their character as such. Houses seemed to be irregularly dotted about on bare ground underneath towering trees. Again they drew together into a street, or a semblance of one. Here my friends closed up, and I gave

the leaden-weighted portmanteau to Kent. A furtive peep at the compass heartened me a little. It seemed as if open country appeared in front, but it was difficult to tell. Near a lamp, three girls passed us, arm in arm. Inquisitively they turned their heads.

The road ascended and curved, fields were on each side, the silhouette of a house in front; to the left, perhaps fifty yards away, the ragged outlines of a wood.

"We 're in the open," I announced, "and on a favorable road, I think. Let 's go into that wood and pack our knapsacks. What time is it?"

"Ten minutes past nine," answered Kent, who carried the luminous wrist-watch.

It was only a thin belt of trees in whose shelter we arranged our loads, and discarded the white collars and shirts we were wearing. From the southward came the barking of a dog and the noise of railway traffic. The dog was not far away. Whether it was because of his bark, or because of a light we saw, we sensed a house in the same direction, near enough to call for careful handling of our electric torches. It was not necessary to warn my friends. They were squatting cautiously close to the ground, never rising above a sitting posture, and screen-

ing the light with their bodies. It was I who received a mild rebuke from the very cautious Kent. I do not think my action deserved it, but I was so elated that its chastening effect was, perhaps, good. Not forgetting the fact that we had yet to pass two strongly guarded lines—the river Ems and the Dutch frontier—I felt, nevertheless, that our task was more than half accomplished.

When we had finished, I bade my friends lie down, one on each side of me, so that I might use the flashlight for a thorough scrutiny of the map. I recognized the road on our right without difficulty. It was a second-class one, and divided the angle between the two highroads. As to direction it was entirely favorable; as to safety it was preferable to a first-class highway. A brook was marked on the map as flowing across it not very far away, and this was of almost greater importance than anything else, for we had not been able to fill our water-bottles. We were thirsty, but not uncomfortably so as yet. My experiences had taught me the paramount necessity of always having sufficient water. How to get it began to occupy a great part of my thoughts from now on.

"It 's quite obvious," I remarked. "We 'll follow this road through Vahren village. We 'll

find water at about twelve o'clock. At about one-thirty we 'll turn at right angles into this road, which will lead us to water again, and then into the northern highroad." I went in detail over the prospective night's march. "And now," I finished, putting map and torch into my pocket and getting up, "good luck to us! Come on. I 'll be in front till further orders."

Once on the road, starting at a good pace, we turned our faces toward the west, toward Holland, and toward freedom.

When I recall the events of my first two escapes, I am astonished at the clearness with which every minute's happenings are imprinted on my mind. I need only close my eyes to see the sights, hear the sounds, and, in a measure, be under the influence of the same emotions which I then experienced.

It is somewhat different with my recollections of this last escape. For the greater part they are as bright as they can be. But there are blurred patches in the pictures of my memory. A number of them seem wholly obliterated.

Soon after everything was over we wrote down the course of events. These notes and our maps are helping me now in my efforts to recall the next five days. But even at the time

of fixing our recollections with pencil and paper, while they were not yet a week old, our joint efforts proved inadequate in filling a blank of about six hours in the second night of our walk.

It was a glorious sensation to feel a road under our feet, and to have the open country about us. It was about the time of the new moon. The rain had ceased hours before, but the clouds were still obscuring the stars, and the night was exceedingly dark.

In due course the first village was indicated by a few scattered houses—the outposts, as it were. We slowed up.

A dense mass of black shadow lay in front of us. Not a light was to be seen anywhere. Slowly we advanced, until the faint outlines of a roof here and a gable there detached themselves from the overshadowing groups of enormous trees, which embowered the village completely in dimly seen masses of foliage. With stealthy steps, almost groping, we entered the blackness, which seemed to close behind us. Nothing broke the silence except the rattle of a chain once or twice, and the muffled lowing of a cow. By contrast it seemed light when we emerged into the open again.

"We ought to get to water in half an hour now. Look out for it. It 'll be a small stream.

We might miss it," I counseled. Kent was close behind me with Tynsdale.

Half an hour—three-quarters of an hour—but no water. Instead we entered another village, not marked on the map. Among the houses a road branched off to the north. I was awfully thirsty. My tongue lay heavy in my mouth.

"Let 's try to cut off that corner," said I. "The other branch of the brook may exist in reality. I think this road will curve round to the northwest or west, and get us there quicker. It 's not marked on the map."

My friends were always willing to follow my suggestion, and we tried it.

The road curved west, then west-by-south.

"Stop a moment! We had better go back to the old route. I don't like this very much now."

Again Tynsdale and Kent followed obediently.

This was the first instance of many in which I did not allow myself to be guided by my instinct, as I should have done if I had been alone. I felt so strongly my responsibility toward my friends that I disliked taking any move I could not fully explain by cold reasoning. Instinct is generally unreasonable. Besides, it does sometimes lead

one astray. In our case it might compel us to walk across-country, and the cross-country stretches in this part of Germany looked forbidding on the map, being mostly marked as heather, moors, and swamps.

Having regained the former road, I discovered after a while that it was turning too much to the south. I was still musing about this when we entered a smooth, broad, first-class highway.

"Let 's rest for a spell," I suggested.

We sat down, with our feet in the ditch, close to the trunk of one of the enormous trees lining the roadside.

"Do you know where we are?" asked Kent, after I had consulted the map and sat blinking again to accustom my eyes to the night.

"Of course I do," I snorted irritably. "We 're on that beastly southern highway I wanted to avoid. I wish I had n't been such a fool as to abandon the other road. I don't know how we got here. The map shows no connecting road down to here at all. The only damage done, as far as I can see, is that we have increased our distance from water. We can hit the by-road leading north, if we follow the *chaussée*. Oh, I 'm thirsty! I 'll try a cigarette." We all lit up.

Three abreast we started again.

"There 's a sign-post," said Kent, whose eyes were exceptionally good.

"To Molbergen," it read, pointing along a straight by-road at right angles to our direction.

"This is the one we are looking for," I announced. "How do you feel, Tynsdale?"

"I can hardly keep my eyes open," he made answer.

"Well, we 'll soon get water," I said, to console him.

"I 'll walk ahead as a pace-maker," suggested Kent.

"Good!" It appeared a splendid idea. "I 'll take the rear. Tynsdale had better follow you close, to get the benefit of your pace-making."

Kent led with a swinging pace along the sandy, rutted road for an hour and a half. The country stretched flat on each hand, often broken by patches of forest. A telephone line on our left irritated me with the monotony of its ever-recurring, never-ending succession of poles. I had the old sensation of walking uphill. We found no water. Then we came to the northern highway, into which we swung by a turn to the left.

By this time my tongue was sticky. I had the feeling of a crust having formed at the corners of my mouth. Neither Tynsdale nor Kent felt thirst so acutely. A little way down the *chaussée* I stopped.

"There is a house over there. I 'll see whether or not there 's a well. They must have a water-supply," I remarked.

Tynsdale and Kent waited in the road at first, but soon followed me. The solitary building stood about fifty paces from it, and a well with windlass and protecting roof faced its western side. No pail was attached to the wire rope, but an old cast-iron pot lay on the ground beside the stone coping. This we tied to the end of the rope with pieces of string, and, turning the handle of the windlass cautiously, let it down. When it came up, filled with very cold, wonderful water, was there ever anything so delicious? We drank in turns, not once, but many times; then filled our water-bottles, and drank most of the remaining liquid.

We passed through another village in the course of the remaining hours. Behind it we came to a large brook, not marked on the map, which rushed gurgling underneath the stone bridge. I insisted upon another drink and a replenishment of our water-bottles.

"I can't keep awake any longer," complained Tynsdale a little later.

"I suppose we had better take a rest, then. Don't you think so, Kent? We 'll just turn off the road and lie down underneath that hedge there. Only for half an hour, mind. We must find decent cover before dawn." This was at half-past three.

We spread the oilskins as a ground-cloth and rolled ourselves into our overcoats. I wanted to keep awake, but fell asleep as promptly as the other two, not to awaken until an hour afterward.

"Get up, quick! No time to lose. Get up!" I aroused my friends. Not more than about half an hour was left us in which to find good cover. Already the air struck my cheek with the damp chill of dawn. It "smelled" morning.

We packed in haste, and hurried along the road. Once, and again, we turned into a by-road, which seemed to be leading toward a wood. But scattered trees near the horizon produce in the dark the impression of a forest, since only their outlines can be seen against the sky. We found each time that we had been lured into a fruitless quest.

The eastern horizon was graying when we came to a small spinney at a cross-roads.

"This will have to do," I said, a little doubtfully.

Pressing toward the heart of the thicket, and using my torch to avoid stabbing branches, I discovered a noose in a bush for trapping birds. I showed it to my friends. "This does n't look like security, does it?"

In the densest part of the spinney we halted.

"Wait a few minutes, will you? I 'll see whether or not I can find something better near at hand." With that I left them. I explored our immediate surroundings without success, located a house in the vicinity, and finally had some difficulty in finding my companions. When I thought I was near them I whistled softly, to be answered by Kent, not three feet away. My friends had prepared a camp, and I lay down by them on the oilskins. The two overcoats we spread over us, and the oilsilks on top. The knapsacks served as pillows, and almost in a moment we were asleep.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE ROAD THROUGH THE NIGHT

WE woke up in full daylight, which revealed the scantiness of our cover. By merely raising our heads we could see people and vehicles pass along the roads, and the sound of voices and the creaking of wheels were at intervals very distinct all day. That it is very much more difficult to see into a thicket than from it, was a consolation with which we reassured ourselves repeatedly. I do not think the others felt any more nervous than did I, who thought we were safe as long as we kept our recumbent position. We hardly moved during the sixteen hours, I believe.

We ate our rations in two instalments and with interruptions slept a good deal. We never got as much sleep again in one day while in Germany. I doubt that we got as much until all was over.

Occasional gleams of sunshine during the morning became ever rarer as the afternoon wore on. Gray clouds threatened rain more

determinedly as the day grew old, but a strong wind which was soughing in the branches overhead kept it off until evening, when it started with a small preparatory shower or two.

When the light began to fail, we packed up and sat about in our raincoats, talking in undertones and listening to the pat-pat-pat of occasional drops among the leaves. The roads had become deserted as darkness fell.

At 9:30 we started our second night's progress.

Two considerations had determined my theoretical choice of route for the night. One was the desirability of keeping well to the north of an artillery practice ground on the hither side of the river Ems, the other the question of water.

In order to carry my intentions into effect, we intended to leave the first-class highway for a communication road which was to branch off in a village about an hour's walk ahead. It was to lead in a tolerably straight line across a desolate stretch of country of no small dimensions.

Soon after our start, the drizzle of rain turned into a regular downpour which drummed noisily on oilskins and hats. A sign-post with the distance from Cloppenburg gave us our exact position, and enabled us to calculate the extent

of ground covered on the previous night. We made it 28 kilometers (17½ miles).

Again we looked in vain for the brook which we had expected to find during the first hour. The water we carried was getting low, and I was anxious to have the bottles full again, and to get a good drink. In the first village we came to, the gurgling of a rain-spout was too tempting, and in spite of the protests of my friends I drank copiously and filled my bottle, whereupon they followed my example. It was just as well that they did so, for more than twenty-four hours were to elapse before we had another, and less enjoyable, opportunity of slaking our thirst with more than a mouthful at a time from our bottles, which was all we permitted ourselves between sources.

To our very circumscribed vision, the village, and all those we had passed through so far, and would have to traverse yet, were of the same type. At night their streets, ill defined among the loosely scattered farm buildings, were wrapped in impenetrable blackness, and both safe and difficult for men in our position to follow. Two steps to one side, and one's companions were lost to sight. To distinguish between the road and a by-lane leading nowhere was frequently impossible, without the help of the

swiftly stabbing, instantly extinguished cone of light from our torches.

In this and the next village we came to I would not risk taking any of the likely-looking by-roads, without some extra assurance, such as a sign-post would have given me, of finding the right turning. Sign-posts were conspicuous by their absence. During the whole night we found only two, neither of them any good for the purpose in hand, and they were the last we saw for the rest of the journey.

Consequently we continued on the first-class highway, which was easy to follow, until it joined the southern road again in the village of Werfte. This was about half-past one in the morning.

The high-road from now on continued due west through flat, monotonous, and swampy country. As fast as we could we pushed along, Kent making pace with his usual swinging gait, hour after hour. For our objective we had two small lakes, shown on the map as touching the road on its northern side. They were to supply us with water before we went into hiding. Close behind them, a single third-class road, impossible to mistake, was to start us north on the third evening on our quest for our proper latitude, and in avoidance of the northern end of

the artillery ground, by this time not more than eight or nine miles in front of us.

The second sign-post we saw that night not long before dawn enabled us to fix our position with accuracy, but a little later we came to the conclusion that our maps had played us false again. The lakes were nowhere in sight, though we ought to have passed or reached them. Since we had left Werfte the track of the steam-tram had accompanied the road on our right, and a screen of bushes and woods had interfered with our view to the north. Now we burst through them, bent on finding a hiding-place away from the road.

"There 's the lake!" shouted Kent, pointing over the black expanse to where, like a shield of dull silver, the surface of the water glimmered three quarters of a mile to the north-northeast. It was too late to approach it then. To the north of us, a small thicket, looking as usual many times its actual size, invited us to rest. We advanced toward it over springy, heather-covered ground and across several wire fences.

On the banks of a deep ditch, scantily sheltered by bushes, young trees, some furze and heather, we made camp. It was a fairly safe place, for the reason that, as we saw later, there was no house within a third of a mile—at the

moment we thought there was no dwelling within several miles—nor any tilled land.

Our resting-place on the bank of the ditch had been selected from the standpoint of concealment only. It was most uncomfortable to lie on. Before the sun had cleared the horizon, we were awake again.

The rain had ceased after midnight, and now a boisterous wind was dispersing the last clouds which hurried across the sky from the northeast, tinted rosily on their under side. The air was extraordinarily clear. Its refreshing coolness quickly drove the last cloying remnants of sleep from our brains. The sun rose. Far away, to the east, the church spire of Werfte stood sharply defined above the smudge of green which indicated the village.

I crept away from my friends during the morning to glean some information, if possible, by a look from the other side of the thicket, toward the west. The pale blue of the sky above, speckled by hurrying clouds, the flat rim of the sky-line, broken by two distant villages, the line of the road by which we had come, continuing toward the large village of Soegel, and a solitary farm, seven hundred yards away, made up the landscape. While I lay watching behind a

furze bush a country cart crept across my circle of vision. Between me and the invisible road a number of cattle sounded unmelodius bells with every hasty movement of their heads.

"We need n't look for the road to-night. It 's there, to the west," I announced, rejoining my friends. "We can break camp early and get water as soon as dusk is setting in. After that we 'll go northwesterly across country, turn north on the road," etc. I outlined the next night's march. Our plans were very elaborate, but came to naught.

"All right," my companions nodded assent. "Now have something to eat." They were munching away at their rations. For a time we chatted in excellent spirits.

"There is a much better place to lie in just behind us. It looks safe enough," suggested Tynsdale, worming his way back to us through the bushes after a short absence.

"Yes; let 's shift! I saw it, too," seconded Kent.

So we shifted, and soon lay comfortably ensconced in the lee of some bushes. Here we were bothered by mosquitoes, for the air was still, but we felt warm, and managed to snatch some sleep during the remainder of the day.

At 8:30 P.M. we were plodding through the

heather toward the lake, which glimmered at the bottom of a shallow depression. We were licking our lips in anticipation of the drink we were going to have. Two hundred yards from the shore the ground became marshy, then a quagmire. We strung out in line abreast in order to find a firm path to the water's edge, but had to desist in the face of impossibilities.

Rain had been threatening for the last four hours, but was still holding off, when we got on to the road, and proceeded north. We had walked steadily for an hour or so. The night was pitch-dark. Black and flat swamp-land extended all round to the indistinct horizon. Here and there the lighter streaks of ditches, full of foul, stagnant water, were ruled across the black expanse. The wires of a telephone line on our right hummed in the wind.

We were walking as best we could—I a little in front on the right, Tynsdale on the other side of the road, Kent almost treading on my heels. The ribbon of turf underneath my feet seemed fairly broad.

A sudden splash behind me caused me to stop and whirl round. A white face at my feet heaved itself, as it seemed, out of the ground, and Kent scrambled back on to the road, squirting water from every seam.

"Did *you* know we were walking within half an inch of a ditch? How is it *you* did n't fall in?" he demanded savagely of me.

"Are you hurt?" I counter-questioned anxiously.

"Not a bit! The water was just deep enough to cover me entirely, except my knapsack. That seems dry," he answered, feeling himself all over. "I 've lost my hat, though."

"Anything else?"

"No, I don't think so. Never mind the old hat. I hardly ever wear it."

"Come on, then! Keep moving, or you 'll catch a chill."

After about one hour and a half, during which a number of paths had demonstrated the unreliability of our maps in this locality, none of them being marked, a cart road on our left proved too much of a temptation for me.

"Are you fellows game," I asked, "to follow me over uncharted ground? I feel certain I can do better by compass alone, and probably save us several miles."

"Don't make speeches, old man; get along. We 'll follow."

I was fortunate in being able to justify this move. Three quarters of an hour afterward we struck a highway a mile in front of the vil-

lage of Spahn, our nearest objective. Pleased with myself, I announced a clear gain of about three miles. Here we took it easy for about twenty minutes, sitting in the road, with our feet in the ditch. Kent and Tynsdale had a draft from the brandy flask, and we all had something to eat.

"This is the fifth shrine we 've seen since Monday night. I always thought northern Germany was entirely Protestant," Kent remarked when our scouting for water at the entrance of a settlement had led us around the structure.

"We 'd much prefer a well, anyway," was our unanimous opinion.

We simply had to have water. After searching among the houses we finally found a rain-tub half full of it. It contained a fair number of insect larvæ, to judge from the tiny, soft bodies passing over our tongues while we drank, but we continued our march with heavy water-bottles.

The name of the village, in black letters on a white board, dispelled any possible doubt as to our position. A white post close to this sign elicited my angry comment:

"I 'd like to know how many of these beastly poles with the direction boards missing we 've seen so far! Do the Boches think they can make

it more difficult for an invading army or something, by knocking their sign-posts to pieces?"

For the next hour and a half our way lay through dense forest. The straight, very wide clearing which served as a road was ankle-deep in sand. As it yielded and gave way under the backward pressure of our hurrying feet, it produced the nightmarish sensation of striving hopelessly in a breathless flight against a retarding force. Thousands of fireflies dotted the roadside with points of greenish light, or drew curves of phosphorescence in the air. A heavy shower urged us to assume the sweltering protection of our raincoats. Several times I checked the direction of the road at its beginning, and even borrowed Tynsdale's compass for the purpose, as the needle of mine seemed to move sluggishly, but I noticed nothing wrong.

The next village, which we entered soon after midnight, looked quite different from what we had expected. It was of considerable size. The streets were in darkness, although electric street lamps were installed. But the yellow squares of numerous lighted windows told of many inhabitants not yet in bed. Near the church we turned into a road on our right.

Among the last houses I checked the road's direction.

"It is n't the road we want," was my conclusion. "Leading too directly north. We 'd better go back and look for the right one. What d' you think?"

"D' you think it safe?"

"Well, we have n't much time to spare. But the streets are dark enough. We might risk it."

Again we passed in front of the church. In what looked like the vicarage at one side, three large windows lit the road in front. A shadow passed over the blinds. A door banged. Hurriedly we dived into the shadow farther on. The footfalls of a single man sounded behind us, ominously determined it seemed. It was too dark to see more than three or four yards, but we were sincerely glad when the sound was gradually left behind and we found ourselves in the open country on a sort of cart track.

"This is n't the road, either. Too far west this time," was my conclusion. "The former road is the better of the two. We 'll strike back to it across-country."

We did so in twenty minutes' work over fields. It soon began to tally better with the

direction on the map. Two hours through fire-fly infested forest saw us enter another village, as dark and as safe as any we had yet passed through. At its farther end we stopped.

"We 've simply got to see whether we can't get more water," I said. "I don't really know where we are. I expect it will be all right, but I do not know how long it will take us to find a brook. These farms must have a water-supply somewhere. Just wait at the corner here. I 'll go scouting. If anything happens to me, I 'll make enough noise to let you know of it. Then you can scoot out of the village and wait for me a reasonable time somewhere along the road." And I left them protesting mildly.

Across a manure-littered farmyard I splashed stealthily into a sort of kitchen-garden, as it turned out. Standing there I used my flash-light once for a look round. From behind me, right over my head and in easy reach, stretched the large branch of a tree, bending under a heavy load of apples. The first I touched remained in my hand at once, which showed them to be ripe. I crammed my pockets and filled my hat. I got almost thirty. Then I joined my companions, who were getting impatient and anxious. It never occurred to me to send Tynsdale and Kent to get their quota, nor did they

think of suggesting it. I am still regretting the omission. We divided the spoils, and sank our teeth into the hard, juicy, sweet flesh of the fruit which had tempted the Mother of us all.

At the end of the village a broken sign-board lay in the ditch: "Village of Wahn, Borough of ——, District of ——," etc. With a sinking heart I fumbled for my map.

"Form round and let 's have a look," I said. "Here we are! I 'm beastly sorry; I 've been a fool! We took the wrong road at Spahn. That big village was Soegel, not Werpeloh, as I thought. No wonder we were puzzled. No wonder I almost got us into a hopeless mess. Fortunately we are clear now, and, but for water, better off, if anything, than on our proper route. Let 's be traveling now, and see whether we can make Kluse. It 's a little over six miles."

The mistake was a very bitter pill for me to swallow. The fact that no harm had come of it was little consolation. One simply must not make mistakes on an escape.

Forest and swamp-land, telegraph-poles and fireflies, and drumming showers of rain, and we were, oh, so tired!

At 3:45 a very large, solitary building on our right lured me toward it in search of the pre-

cious liquid. It was an enormous sheep stable, the packed occupants of which set up a terrified bleating when the ray of my torch struck accidentally through a hole in the wall. A motion to get into the loft for a good day's sleep was negatived on Kent's determined opposition, as too dangerous.

Half an hour later we dragged ourselves into a thick pine copse, pitched camp in impenetrable darkness, moistened our lips with some vapid rain-water, and fell asleep.

CHAPTER XXIV

CROSSING THE EMS

IT was still dark when I opened my eyes. A steady sound was all around me, and close at hand a more definite one: Tap-tap-tap-tap. I was only half awake.

I stretched out my hand and put it into a pool of water which had formed on the oilsilk covering us. It was raining heaven's hardest.

Half an hour of disjointed thinking brought me to the conclusion that we had better do something. As yet the overcoats underneath the oilsilks were hardly wet. The first gray light of dawn was beginning to filter through the close-standing trees.

"Wake up! Wake up! It 's raining," I called. "We 'll get soaked, and we don't want to carry an extra thirty pounds of water on our backs."

I got on my feet. With the heavy clasp-knife bought in Hanover I lopped off the branches just over our heads and stretched an awning of oilsilks three feet above the ground, attempting

ineffectually to make them shed the water over the edge of the shelter, instead of letting it accumulate on us. For a time it was all right; then the rain ceased.

By now the light showed that we had camped far too near the road for proper concealment. But the awning had found approval in the eyes of my friends, and I felt such pride in the contrivance that I hesitated to advise moving camp farther into the thicket. Instead, I set to work to camouflage it with a screen of branches and young trees, which I cut off and stuck in the ground. I got myself much wetter by doing all this than if I had taken things quietly. So did Tynsdale, who was infected by my passion for work.

When a cart creaked along the road, its wheels plainly visible from our hiding-place, we resolved to move. In the heart of the thicket the trees were much smaller—only a little taller than ourselves—and more widely spaced. This and the open sky above us gave us a sensation of freedom and fresh air. I constructed another shelter. Occasional showers during the morning filled the sagging places of the awning with water, and this we drank in spite of the bitter taste imparted to it by the oiled fabric.

Sleep, even in the intervals between the

showers, was almost out of the question. With the day, thousands of mosquitoes had come to life among the grasses covering the ground. They rose in clouds wherever we went, and attacked the rash beings who unexpectedly had penetrated into their fastness. Soon our hands and faces were red and swollen with their bites.

About noon the last clouds disappeared. The sun began to pour down from a deep blue sky, its rays falling hot and scorching into the windless space between the trees. We divested ourselves of our wet upper garments, and spread them on the firs around us to dry in the sun.

The only sounds that came to us were the occasional tooting of a tug on the river Ems, now not more than three miles to the west. The rarer and nearer shriek of a railway engine on a line parallel to its bank interrupted every now and again the zzzz-ping, zzzz-ping, of the hovering mosquitoes. A dog barked near by. A slow cart rolled and creaked past the copse.

The road in front of the thicket was converging toward the railway, which it met three to four miles to the north of us at the village and station of Kluse, a little more than two miles to the east of Steinbild and the river Ems. Two and a half miles to the north of this last village

a wood was indicated on the map. This was our next objective.

From information received, we supposed the Ems to be strongly guarded by sentries and patrols. The five-mile-wide ribbon of country between its western bank and the Dutch frontier was *Sperrgebiet* (closed territory). Nobody was allowed to enter it except by special military permit. A day's observation from the shelter of the forest was to show us how best to cross the river—whether we could swim it, with or without luggage, and if necessary, to permit the construction of a small raft to ferry the latter across. Perhaps we could steal a boat!

Near the station of Kluse we intended to cross the railway line, sneak through the village, and then walk across-country to the river and the forest.

Dusk found us behind some bushes by the deserted roadside, awaiting the night.

We started early, walking slowly at first, to squander time. As darkness thickened, we increased our pace. But it is difficult to speed up when one has started slowly. Perhaps the village and station were farther away than we thought. Anyhow, it seemed an age before we caught sight of the first signal-lights on the rail-

way. As during the previous night, the road lay through perfectly flat, desolate swamp land, crossed by ditches of stagnant water. A wood accompanied us on our right for some time. The stars were occasionally obscured by drifting clouds.

Suddenly we saw a cluster of red signal-lights over the dim shape of a signal bridge, the lighted station building a hundred yards beyond, and a level crossing turning out of our road at right angles. "This is it," I said.

We stepped across the metals. Just beyond them, a small building on our left, its windows lighted, cast a glimmer over the road. Apprehensively glancing round I passed into the deep shadow of the avenue beyond it.

A little later we were standing on a bridge in the small village. A considerable brook rushed gurgling underneath.

"When we passed that house," Tynsdale said casually, "a large dog of the police type came after me. I was walking last, you know. The brute pushed his nose into the back of my knee and turned away without a sound!"

We had a good drink at the brook, then proceeded along the cut-up road, tree-lined and dark. In a likely spot, perhaps five hundred

yards behind the village, I stopped. "Here 's where our cross-country work starts; keep close behind."

As nearly as possible we proceeded in a northwesterly direction. The going was bad. The country was divided by wire fences, deep ditches and hedges, into small fields, most of them swampy meadows. Half the time we waded through water over the tops of our shoes. This continued for an indefinite period, and terminated when we reached a road where it curved from a northerly direction toward the southwest. Here I had what proved to be an inspiration.

I had seen the beginning of the road marked on the map farther north. On paper it terminated nowhere. Actually it was here, in a spot where it ought not to be. Its deeply rutted surface showed that it was frequently used. The village of Steinbild, to the south of us now, was obviously its destination.

I explained to my companions: "I 'm as certain as I can be that this road enters Steinbild close to the water's edge and avoids the main street. The curve seems to show that. I 'd like to follow it. To lie in the woods, away from anywhere, and watch the river, may not gain us anything. In the village we may find

a boat. We 've any amount of time, anyway, and can always come back. It 'll not be so very dangerous, with due caution, if the place is as dark as the villages we have seen so far. Will you chance it and follow me?"

"We 'll follow wherever you lead," said Kent heartily. Tynsdale's nod I took for granted; I could n't see it.

In a quarter of an hour we were among scattered houses. Again, five minutes later, we stood in the shadow of tremendous trees, in such darkness that we were aware of one another's presence only from the sound of breathing and small movements.

In front of us the mirage of a few stars danced uncertainly on the smooth surface of a fairly wide river. A fish splashed noisily while we stood listening for suspicious sounds.

We moved carefully along the river path, upstream, to the south. The trees continued in unbroken, stately procession. A barge of the large German steel type lay half-way toward midstream. A boat was tied to its stern. Something, I forget now what it was, made us go on—I have a dim recollection of a light in its cabin. Another barge, with a boat by her side, loomed up, riding high on the water and without cargo, opposite a tiny pier of earth, which ended

perhaps twenty yards from the boat. In a house, some distance farther up, one lighted window winked in the night.

We were standing on the pier.

"Who 's to get that boat?" asked Tynsdale.

"Draw lots for it," I suggested. The shortest piece of match remained in my hand. Off came my knapsack.

"Going in all standing?" inquired Kent.

"No fear; nothing like doing things comfortably. Get out that towel, will you, and be ready."

My clothes were off. Cautiously I slipped into the water. I remember distinctly, even at this moment, that my toes gripped the sticks forming the foundation of the pier. The bank fell vertically beyond my depth. Bracing myself against the cold shock, I pushed off, to be taken into a delicious tepid embrace by the kindly river. Two long strokes. I paused to feel the current. There was none. Three more. The boat loomed above me. Shooting up, I caught the gunwale at the stern with the tip of my fingers "Bump, bump, bump," went the bows against the lighter's side in feeble movement. "Bump, bump, bump." I had drawn myself up, and clambered in. "Bump." I stood in the bows, fumbling with

the painter, which was big enough to serve a young White Star liner for a hawser. "Bump." The gap between lighter and boat widened as I shoved off carefully.

I grabbed at a pole lying in the bottom of the boat. The water proved too deep for punting, so I used it as a paddle, standing on a forward thwart.

The boat was an enormously clumsy affair. Tynsdale snatched at the painter when the bows touched the pier. "Get into your things, we 'll do the rest."

"Here 's the brandy." Kent solicitously handed me the flask. I did n't need it, but thought I deserved a pull.

When I was dressed, I joined my friends, and we put our things into the boat. Tynsdale, who had grown up among shipping, had swung her round, so that her nose pointed downstream. We clambered in.

Kent and I were sitting in the bow when he pushed off, and started to propel us across the river in proper waterman's style with an oar he had found in the bottom of the boat. Silently working it over the stern, he guided her round the counter of the barge, underneath the wire cable which connected the latter with the one lower down, and out into the placid stream.

Not a word was spoken after we got clear. The large bulk of the empty barge dwindled as the strip of water widened between us. The trees on the bank we had left grew smaller, a trembling line of light glimmered on the surface of the river from the winking window of the cottage. Then the other bank grew distinct and high. The boat's nose swung upstream and touched. I am not quite sure who was ashore first, Kent or I, but I am certain I had the painter.

"Don't let her drift," Tynsdale whispered from his quarter-deck, when I had scrambled ashore. "Belay somewhere, if you can." We found a post with an iron ring on top, almost embedded in the ground, and made fast. Our knapsacks were put ashore. Tynsdale left last, as befitted the captain.

"Leave her there," he counseled. "If we let her drift and get caught, we 'll be charged with stealing her. They may not trouble to investigate if they find her here."

Hurriedly we retired among some bushes which dotted the hollows along the river bank.

"Council of war," I suggested in high glee. "What 's to be done now? What time, Kent?"

"Twelve-forty-five."

"What are your opinions? Are we to try to cross the frontier to-night or not?"

"To-night, by all means to-night!" urged Tynsdale. We were all very much excited, of course.

"Time 's getting short! Wait until to-morrow night!" counseled cautious Kent.

The decision rested with me.

"Time *is* getting rather short, but we might do it. Question is, can we find cover if we don't? It must be good, to serve its purpose in the Sperrgebiet. I think we ought to dump everything we can spare, and go forward as fast as possible. We can always alter our minds, until after we get on to the morass."

"Good!" grunted Tynsdale.

"As you wish," Kent gave way gracefully.

"Then hurry!" I instructed.

Feverishly we went through our impedimenta, thrust the remainder of our biscuits, escapers' short-bread, chocolate, and such indispensable things as were not already there, into our pockets, and shoved rucksacks, overcoats, raincoats, and everything else underneath the bushes.

I knew the map too well to want to look at it long. Had we not spent days studying the

stretch in front of us, often with the help of magnifying glasses?

"What time, Kent?"

"One o'clock."

"Give me exactly half an hour."

Relieved of about thirty pounds in weight, I set the fastest pace in my power downstream, along the river bank. I hoped to find a path there, which was to take us to the "jumping-off place" to the north of us, where I intended to get to the swamp. The path was there. The going was easy, and comparatively safe. Bushes dotted the banks and gave continuous shelter.

It cannot be denied that our procedure was risky. We took it for granted that we should not meet any sentries along the river, in spite of our information to the contrary. But slow and careful going seemed equally risky at the time. Only speed could help us across the frontier that night.

My decision in favor of trying to bring our venture to an immediate conclusion was wrong. I ought to have seen that it was more than likely that we should find cover along the river. Yet—I don't know.

"The half-hour is over," said Kent.

The river was flowing placidly on our right,

swirling softly. Straight across from us a back-water lost itself between tall reeds. This was the spot I had hoped to reach. We filled our water-bottles and drank. Then I slid down the bank, raised here above the surrounding country, and started due west, followed by my companions. Passing a few yards of scattered bushes, with rank grass between them, I plunged into a dense thicket of oak saplings. Pushing and straining, I worked on, in order to get through what I imagined to be a narrow belt. It would not come to an end, but grew thicker instead, finally making progress impossible. In the light of the torch the small trees stood impenetrably close.

"Here 's our cover; no time to work round this patch, and no need to, either," I said.

"Well, I 'm glad," commented Kent.

"I wish we had n't left our overcoats behind," I reflected. "Let 's see. Four hours till daylight. We 'll be damnably cold. Let 's go fetch 'em. Heaps of time. Nothing else to do."

Back on the river bank I tied my handkerchief to a branch, knee-high above the ground. After a careful look round, to impress the contours of the landscape on my mind, we started back.

I had not the slightest misgivings about our ability to find our knapsacks and to disappear again into our hiding-place. The hollow where we had left them? Gracious me! I could walk there blindfolded. I could draw its shape now. My cock-sureness was not at all damped by Kent's dismal forebodings, on which he started as we approached the spot.

We found the boat, but not our luggage; we searched for it more than half an hour, quite recklessly at the last. There were thousands of apparently identical hollows. They had multiplied exceedingly during our absence. I thought I entered them all. But our luggage was lost, and stayed lost.

"No use. We 've got to go." I fell in with the urging of the others at last.

At about 3:30 we stretched ourselves on the dry leaves among the oak saplings and fell asleep.

CHAPTER XXV

THE LAST LAP

HALF an hour later we were awake again, shivering and with chattering teeth. The wind was rising and rustling in the canopy of leaves over our heads. It was dark and bitterly cold.

"I 'm going to do something," I announced. "We may have rain. I 'll build a shelter."

The oak saplings offered an ideal material for an arbor, although the clasp-knife did not bite readily through their tough fibers. Jointly we interlaced the crowns of six or seven stout saplings, growing in a circle, and twisted long branches in and out of the stems. We made a small but dense roof. The floor we covered with small twigs and leaves to the depth of two or three inches.

The exertion made the blood course through our veins again. Before we had finished, it was day.

The wind had increased to a gale, which shrieked and roared and rustled among the fo-

liage, sending occasional eddies even into our hiding-place. It kept the rain off, which threatened now and again during the forenoon. There were no mosquitoes. I do not think there ever are any among oaks.

Several excursions to the river bank, in couples or singly, one of us always remaining in the arbor, warmed us a little when we had got chilled to the bone. The river path, and the belt of scattered bushes, remained deserted all day. But we observed a considerable amount of river traffic. Long strings of barges, mostly empty, were being towed upstream by powerful tugs.

Tynsdale scouted toward the west, away from the river, and reported a farm some distance from our hiding-place in that direction, and the existence of a pond and a belt of marsh-land behind the thicket.

We slept in snatches of minutes, until the cold awoke us again, and again sent us dancing or scouting about. It was the most miserable camp we had yet experienced, but the safest, and the one where we were the least thirsty. There was more water about us than was altogether desirable, we thought at the time. Twenty-four hours later, looking back, we altered our opinion.

The distance from this camp to the Dutch frontier was five miles to the west-northwest, as the crow flies. Opposite to us the border traversed an extensive swamp, the Bourtange Moor, twenty-five miles in length, and between five and seven miles in width.

According to our map, neither road nor path led over it, which was one of the reasons why we had selected it as the point to strike at. "Information received" had encouraged our belief that the swamps which extend along nearly the whole of the northern frontier between Holland and Germany can be traversed in summer and autumn during normal years. Other information tended to show that comparatively they were negligently guarded. I had never forgotten a newspaper article which I had read in Ruhleben in the winter of 1915–1916. A territorial had described his duties as a frontier guard. There was one passage: "When on duty I shared a small hut with another man. . . . We had to walk two hours to the nearest post." Two men to guard a two-hours' stretch! Ridiculous! Camouflage! but still—

Our route would be across the northern half of the moor. I had talked it over with my companions many a time.

"There is this large forest at the north end

of the swamp. If the recent rains have made the swamp impassable, we 'll have to make for it and try to cross the frontier where it runs through the wood. I should hate to have to do that. A hundred to one, sentries there will be as thick as flies in summer. But we may have no alternative. For that eventuality, we will take the most favorable course across the swamp, walking west by north. Since we must continually go round bad places, we will make all corrections northerly, and thus edge off toward the wood, and lessen the distance in that way.

"These two roads, parallel to the river, which we shall have to cross before getting on to the swamp proper, will be dangerous. I should n't wonder if sentries and patrols were to be found on them. But I cannot imagine how they can easily relieve a man on a trackless morass; can you?"

At 5:30 we ate our last meal. A very slender one it was. We reserved only some chocolate and the tin of Horlick's malted milk tablets, which we always had looked upon as our emergency ration. These we divided into equal shares.

At 5:45 I advised the cutting of long, stout staves. They would be useful, I thought, for

the work ahead of us. I had no idea that they would make all the difference between failure and success.

At 6 o'clock we could not stick it any longer inside the thicket. We made our way out, and walked up and down behind the bushes, waiting for darkness.

Of course we were on edge. I do not think we had had in all eighteen hours' sleep since Saturday. It was now Friday. And we were merely waiting, waiting for the time when we could act, when the game was to be decided. We were not very nervous, but we were subdued. I think we all believed we should succeed, although I tried to look on the black side of things. It seemed so impossible that three years—three years!—of captivity should come to an end. Did we look far ahead? I remember that my mind went no farther than to visualize a river, a mile or so across the border, which was to tell us that we were free!

The sun had disappeared, the wind lulled into silence. The sky, brushed free of clouds, spanned pale blue from sky-line to sky-line. A crescent moon had peeped her last over the western rim of the world, and followed the sun. The shadows were growing dense underneath bush and canopied foliage.

The river murmured sleepily as we went to drink. Tynsdale crouched against the steep bank and handed up the full bottles, one by one. We took up our staves and very slowly walked down the river, before it was quite dark, looking for open country on the left.

The stars had come out, one after another. Quickly their numbers increased, until myriads of them twinkled and glittered. It was an absolutely ideal night for our purpose.

The oaks on our left came to an end. A shallow depression, with the glint of water here and there, intervened between us and the rising ground some distance away.

"Here we start," said I, "on our last lap!"

"Eight-thirty," said Kent.

"Come on!" I answered.

Descending from the river bank, we found the ground most difficult. Two or three wide drainage ditches were crossed with the help of their sluice-gates, smaller ones we jumped with our staves. Then came marshy meadows and open patches of water. For about an hour we were almost always in over our ankles, frequently much deeper, wandering through the shallowest places.

In a sort of dell, on rising ground now, with

small copses to right, left, and in front, we halted, removed our boots and emptied them of water, and wrung out our socks and trousers. This was quite necessary. The squirting noise of our steps advertised our presence a long way in the still night.

Here, if I mistake not—it may have been a little later—we arranged the order of our march. I took the van. My task was to pick the way to keep the direction. Kent, next, was to pay particular attention to our nearer surroundings, try to spot danger—sentries and patrols, etc.—and keep count of the time. Every four or five hundred yards he was to signal "down," when we were to "flop." By this manœuver we would contract the horizon and, perhaps, spot sentries against the sky-line. Tynsdale, in the rear, was to check the direction, and speak, if he saw me apparently make a wrong move. All of us were to keep our eyes wide open and all senses on the alert.

When we topped the rise we sank down silently. There was the first road, across our course, hardly discernible on the black, flat expanse. Nothing moved; no sound, except that of our own breathing, disturbed the stillness. Obliquely across some fields we came to the second road.

Again we crouched. "All 's well. Go on."

After that, a smooth, very springy surface made agreeable walking for a short time.

"Hou—" I started.

"Houses to left and right in front!" whispered Kent. Again we looked and listened.

They were two small single structures, standing perhaps three hundred yards apart, as if dropped from a giant child's play-box. When I had led through the space between, a path was found to run past them.

Now began the swamp proper, as flat and as black, at first, as a congealed lake of asphalt, covered with the same exceedingly short growth we had already encountered, like very tiny heather plants, or their densely intertwined roots, and very springy with the concealed bog underneath.

With the greatest care I kept the north star just a little in front of my right shoulder. We were advancing rapidly. There seemed no possibility of sentries standing on a trackless waste.

I felt very sure of myself, very much exhilarated, very happy. We had time to notice our surroundings. They were eerie in the extreme. We were in the center of a perfect circle, black as pitch, except for some whitish patches ahead.

Those whitish patches came nearer. The first

we approached I tested with my staff. Firm sand! They increased in number, flowed together here and there. Only narrow black strips now, connected with larger black areas beyond. Suddenly, one of the white spaces, not a whit different to look at from those we had already crossed, was water. Correction north. They were all water! We were being pushed to the north at a great rate. So I corrected southerly once or twice, at first, then alternately with a northerly deviation.

It was nerve-racking business to pick the way. Our deliberate halts and surveys had grown more infrequent as the involuntary ones increased in number. Occasionally we had seen and crossed a track.

I think Kent had just announced "Twelve o'clock," when—

"Pfattt!" said a rifle, far to the north. We stared intently in the direction of the sound.

"Pfattt!" it repeated spitefully; "pfattt!"

We could not see the spit of flame. It must have been in the wood. Later, when we met the men whom the bullets had been meant for, this proved to be correct.

Without a word to the others I turned due west. The swamps are kindlier than German riflemen.

We left off making any remarks. We were too strung up for talk.

"This is a patch of a different kind," I thought. Like dull silver it gleamed under the stars, not half as bright as the others. The ground was very unstable all about us. I could feel slow waves rolling sluggishly under my feet, caused by my own and my companions' footsteps on the thin carpet of vegetable matter covering the morass. When I tested the patch I found it to be slime. Correction southerly, all southerly now, to edge away from the wood. The areas of slime increased in number, multiplied, flowed together. The third I came to seemed to offer some resistance to the probing staff at first, then the pole went in as into water. I lost my balance. My left foot swung forward, to find another hold. Instantly it was under the surface. Just as quick Kent's arms were about me. Violently he jerked me back, I clinging to my staff.

"Thanks!"

The ground got worse and worse. Some of the slimy places which appeared firmer than the rest we crossed. Flat-footedly we slithered over them one after the other, our staves held horizontally.

Abruptly we were in the peat cuttings—great

yawning holes and ditches, running mainly from north to south, black, with sometimes a star or two, mirrored in the foul water a foot or so below the edge. The passage had to be made across bridges of standing peat, hardly ever more than two feet wide, which swayed as we shuffled over them. I held grimly to the western course, as well as I could. Going south seemed easier, but that direction meant no progress toward the frontier, rather the reverse. And north? No, thank you! Not after those shots.

I was standing precariously balanced on a peat bridge, the pole thrown far forward as a third leg—oh, those precious poles!—when a splash sounded behind, and a gurgling noise. Kent had gone in.

"What 's happened? Can't you help him? I can't!" I called to Tynsdale.

We were under far too great a stress to feel any particular emotion. At any rate, I was. And as to helping, I could n't even turn my head without losing my balance.

Before Tynsdale could reply, I heard a slight scramble, the swishing of water, and then Kent's subdued voice expressing his entirely unsubdued opinion about peat cuttings. Part of his particular bridge had crumbled under his foot.

He had fallen into a hole. The stout oak sapling, carried firmly in both hands, one end of it rammed into the ground for a hold, had fallen across the opening, its other end descending on firm ground. It had kept Kent suspended. Only his legs had gone into the water.

The incident decided me. "South," I called over my shoulder.

A short time later, the peat holes grew scarcer.

"West!"

There were the slimy patches again! We went around a few. Most of them we crossed in a bee-line. They seemed firmer here. A few much smaller sheets of water! Then again a flat, unbroken, springy surface.

We were all going strong, out to make westing as fast as we could put our feet to the ground; no thought, now, of crouching.

A barbed wire, behind it a deep, wide ditch, beyond that a plowed field, were in front of us.

The human mind is a queer contrivance. We had just negotiated some rather ugly ground. We had not bothered about, hardly become aware of, the risks we had taken. Now we were hesitating for a few moments in front of a ditch with firm sides which, at the worst, we could

easily have waded. At last we jumped, landing in the water half-way up to our knees. I lost my precious aluminium water-bottle there. Then across the field, across another ditch, and so four times.

On the way I asked Tynsdale: "Nothing to remark about our course?"

"I thought you altered it, and swung due west at one point."

"Yes, after the shots."

"Intentional?"

"Sure!"

"Thought so."

A canal, seemingly in course of construction, was crossed on a large tree-trunk, which bridged it. Kent and I did it astride. Tynsdale walked. Two hundred yards farther we stood on the banks of another full-grown canal.

"We must be in Holland," I remarked.

"I would n't like to say so," replied Kent. "You know there 's a canal parallel and close to the frontier on the German side, forty or fifty miles farther south."

"Yes, and it 's marked on our map, and this is n't."

"A river, not a canal, was to show us we were in Holland!"

"True, but they may have turned the river

into a canal. Man, the frontier runs across the swamp. We 're off the swamp. We 're in Holland, I bet you what you like."

"I don't think you ought to be so cock-sure."

"But I am. Here, do you want to swim across?"

"No."

"All right! We 'll turn south along its banks!"

Soon we came abreast of a house which lay a hundred yards or so to the east, toward Germany.

"Let 's go have a look," I suggested. We did so.

The whole character of the cottage, for such it was, struck me as un-German. I pulled out my torch: "This is n't German. Look at that front door. Decorated with painted flowers!"

Kent arrived breathlessly from somewhere: "This can't be Germany! There is a big dish, full of potatoes, on the table in the front room!"

"Let 's knock!"

We knocked. We had no time to ask questions, for, before the last rap had sounded, "Holland! Holland!" called a male voice from within.

Holland! We stood and looked at one another silently, then retreated a few steps.

"Cheers, boys," I said. "Hip, hip, hip—"

Three feeble cheers seemed to be immediately swallowed up in the darkness. How thin, weak, and far away our voices sounded!

Then we turned, to make our way to the nearest village.

CHAPTER XXVI

FREE AT LAST

WE had only gone a few steps when a man came running after us. His Dutch and our German made conversation possible. Kent was rather good at understanding and imparting his meaning.

"Orlog gefangenen?" the man asked.

"Yah, yah!"

"Roosland?"

"Nay, nay; Engelsch!"

"Engelsch?" He gripped our hands and shook them warmly. Then we had to accompany him back to his cottage. He ushered us into the room where Kent had seen the "big dish, full of potatoes." His wife, in picturesque undress, fired a volley of questions at her husband, clasped her hands, shook ours, and began lighting the kitchener. Two daughters—or were there three?—emerged from cavernous cabin beds, let into the wall. Shyly they dressed in front of us.

Then the table was loaded with things to eat.

We had fried veal, bread, butter, and plenty of milk and hot coffee. All this was offered us spontaneously in a farm laborer's cottage at 2:30 in the morning. Enviously I watched my companions enjoying their meal. I was too done up to make more than a show of it.

A little later the man accompanied us to the nearest village, Sellingen. He walked in front with Kent, Tynsdale and I followed in the rear. The walk was a nightmare to me. Our guide carried a lantern. I could not keep my eyes off its reflex on the ground. The direct rays stabbed intolerably into my eyes. It seemed to hang in a Gothic archway, which always kept receding in front of me. I was almost convinced of the reality of the archway.

"Can't we get through that gate?" I asked Tynsdale.

"What gate? Here, where are you going?" and he pulled my arm and saved me from walking slap into the canal. After that I pulled myself together and felt better. Both my friends were much fresher than I.

We arrived at the village at last, and were given a delicious bed on plenty of straw, with plenty of blankets.

Kent was up early next morning. He accepted I do not know how many successive in-

vitations to breakfast, while Tynsdale and I slept until half-past seven. In the course of the morning we were taken to a military station at Ter Apel by the village policeman, who appeared in his best uniform, with two huge silver tassels at his chest.

The very atmosphere was different. A sergeant in whose special charge we were placed regretted that he could not put proper rooms at our disposal. "But since the gentlemen will have to be quarantined first, they will perhaps understand if we keep them away from upholstered furniture."

We had a wash, and an excellent meal, with a bottle of port.

"Did you meet any sentries?" we were asked.

"Not one."

"Where did you cross over?"

"North of Sellingen."

"You came over the swamp, then?" with elevated eyebrows.

"Yes, right across."

"You were lucky. Up to a fortnight ago, sentries stood along the frontier at one hundred-meter intervals. Then they were withdrawn, because the swamp became impassable. You were fortunate, too, in getting across the Ems. A great many fugitives get drowned in it."

"Once, during my first attempt, I got caught on Dutch soil by the Germans," I remarked in the course of the conversation.

"What? On Dutch territory? Where was that?" The sergeant was very much interested.

"I can show it to you on a map. It was northwest of Bocholt."

He disappeared and returned with maps and telegraph forms. I told him my story, and he made notes and wrote two telegrams.

"What you say is possible," he said at last. "Our men stand three hundred meters behind the actual frontier."

The next two nights we spent in a hutment in Coevorden. We met a number of Russian privates and N. C. O.'s there, who had made good their escape and were, like us, waiting to be sent to a quarantine camp. Among them were three who had crossed the same night as we, but through the woods at the northern end of the swamp. We were indebted to them and their dead comrade on German soil for the warning shots at midnight.

There followed a fortnight in quarantine camp in Enschede. Under the Dutch regulations, any person "crossing the frontier in an irregular manner," without a passport, viséd by a Dutch

consul, is subjected to this quarantine. We tried to shorten our stay there, pleading that we came from a healthy camp. We were unsuccessful.

We did not like Enschede camp. The food was insufficient for us, who could not live almost exclusively on potatoes. We found it strange that we should not be allowed to supplement our rations by purchasing extra food. The only things we could buy, at first, were apples and chocolate, and only a limited amount of either. Our deep gratitude is due, however, to Mr. Tattersall of Enschede, who indefatigably looked after us and the other Englishmen in Enschede camp, much to the disadvantage of his pocket.

After we had received a clean bill of health, being civilians, we were allowed to proceed to Rotterdam without a guard. We arrived there at ten o'clock one night, and I was promptly arrested, being mistaken for an embezzler who had decamped the same day from somewhere, taking fifteen thousand florins of another man's money with him. My health passport saved the situation.

The next morning we were at the British consulate. The rest of the day we careered through the town in a motor-car—from the con-

sulate to the shipping-office, from the shipping-office to somewhere else, from there to the consulate's doctor, back to the shipping-office and the photographer, and again to the consulate. That night we were on board at Hook of Holland.

Two days afterward—!

In the gray dawn of an autumn morning our small ship heaved to the incoming swell as she steamed out to take up her station in the convoy. Soon she was dancing joyously to the shrilling of the wind and the sizzling swish of the seas. Two long, low gray shapes accompanied us on each quarter. Hardly discernible at first, they grew more distinct with the light. There were more of them, but invisible, guarding the long line of ships. Occasionally other shapes appeared on the horizon, very faint in their war-paint.

Toward evening I saw again the well-remembered piles of a British landing-stage. How often had I pictured them during three long years! It was always there that I had imagined my home-coming. It had become reality.

Six weeks later: Time: 10 A.M. Enter servant.

"You 're wanted on the 'phone, sir."

"Who is it?"

"Does n't want to give a name, sir."

"Thanks.— Hullo! Hullo!"

"That Mr. Keith?"

"Yes. Who 's speaking?"

"Don't you recognize my voice, Eric?"

"No, can't say I do."

"It 's Wace!"

"What 's that?"

"Me—Wallace, Wallace!"

"Good heavens!"

"Yes; arrived last night! Speaking from Hackney. *You* know!"

So Wallace had won through too, though playing a lone game!

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